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News | 15.09.2017

Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 11-15 September 2017

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Aviation Emission Trading System (ETS): "stop the clock" cannot continue indefinitely
Debate Monday, vote Wednesday

In February, the European Commission proposed to extend indefinitely the “stop the clock” measure under which international aviation remains exempt from the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). The environment committee voted before the summer to strengthen the proposals, setting a deadline of the end of 2020.
The EP plenary decided by a huge majority to follow the position of the environment committee and set a 2020 end date to this time-out in order to press ICAO to agree on a meaningful system. The EP also tightened the requirements for intra-EU flights. The Greens/EFA voted in favour of the report.

Plenary speech by MEP Bas Eickhout
Text adopted by EP
See our blog post

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EU must place arms embargos on countries breaching humanitarian law
Debate Tuesday, vote Wednesday

The report from Greens/EFA rapporteur Bodil Valero which shows how illegitimate EU arms exports contribute to human rights abuses, forced migration and terrorism was adopted by a majority of the European Parliament.

The adopted report includes the key demand that the EU Member States must stop selling weapons to Saudi-Arabia because of its military actions against Yemen and its people.

The principle of a sanctions mechanism against Members States who do not comply with the EU Common Position on arms exports as well as the plan to establish a new supervisory body are also key achievements. It also promotes the idea to put the precautionary principle at the centre of export policy considerations as well as the overall situation in the country, in particular the state of democracy.

Plenary speech by rapporteur Bodil Valero
Text adopted by EP
See our press release

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Fipronil eggs scandal - Member States must provide needed resources
Council and Commission Statements, Tuesday

Following a request from the Greens/EFA group, the Parliament debated the Fipronil eggs scandal which broke over the summer. 22 EU countries received shipments of fipronil-laced food. *"Food controls will only be effective if Member States provide the resources needed to implement them"*, said Green food safety spokesperson **Bart Staes**. *EU governments have to take food controls much more seriously. Both the Netherlands and Belgium wasted precious time in notifying EU authorities. It is great that the EU has a "rapid alert system"* (RASFF - Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed*), but it will only work if Member States take fast and decisive action.* Better cooperation is needed to stop further food scandals.

Plenary speech by MEP Bart Staes
See our food and GMO-related activities

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Migration: Member States must show solidarity
Commission Statement, Tuesday

The EU has the deadliest borders in the world with nearly 3 out of 100 migrants and refugees losing their lives in the Mediterranean. Rather than attacking or hindering the work of NGOs, EU Member States should be showing greater solidarity in their response and provide more safe passages. During the European Parliament debate on migration, Green migration spokesperson **Judith Sargentini** called for more action to stop the poverty driving forced migration: *"We know that there are fewer people on dodgy boats trying to reach Italy. Less people drowning on the Mediterranean is in itself good news. But we cannot lose sight of the continued problems being suffered in Libya and elsewhere. We have heard horrific stories of abuse, violence, rape, human trafficking and even murder in the centres in Libya. But there is not one refugee camp in Libya under surveillance by the international community. What is surely missing now is proposals to really counter the poverty driving forced migration. Because that is what we want to see; that people are not forced to leave their home town to pursue a better future."*

Plenary speech by MEP Judith Sargentini

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Turkey: no progress without respect for fundamental rights
Commission Statement, Tuesday

Greens/EFA have consistently condemned the systematic violation of human rights and the persecution of opposition in Turkey. We should not forget that 50% of Turkish voters voted against Erdogan's reform of the Constitution. But without improvement of human rights there should be no negotiations on modernisation and enlargement of the Customs Union. Member States should stop all weapons exports to Turkey.

Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Ska Keller
See previous press release on July's report

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State of the Union - Commission must forge bold new direction
Debate Wednesday

Jean-Claude Juncker delivered on Wednesday his annual speech on the State of the Union.

Through the voice of its Co-President Philippe Lamberts, the Greens/EFA called on the Commission to listen to the concerns of Europe's people and deliver a bold agenda. *For far too long, the people of Europe have suffered the consequences of crises that were not of their making, while big corporations and the rich have prospered. From toxic air quality to financial insecurity, the European Union has failed to prove how it can add value to their lives. Europe cannot continue with business as usual. A new direction is needed, with an urgent focus on reducing inequality and our ecological impact so that all Europeans – including future generations – can enjoy the possibility of a dignified life.*

"The best way to build our future together is for the European Union to become a global leader in the

transition towards just and sustainable societies. No single member state can meet our ecological, social, economic and security challenges alone - "taking back control" has to mean Europeans working together.", said Philippe Lamberts.

Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Philippe Lamberts
See our video

Dieselgate: strengthening EU environment, health, consumer rights
Greens/EFA topical debate, Wednesday

This is our first opportunity to make use of the new topical debate slots. Recently, several countries and manufacturers announced steps to phase out Diesel, but ambition on fixing the existing illegally dirty fleet is still lacking.

With millions of cars across Europe polluting at an illegal level, the European Commission should be taking bold action to protect public health. Yet two years on from the scandal, the Commission is still dragging its heels. That's why Greens/EFA we are calling on them to introduce repair standards for the existing diesel fleet in Europe, which would give Member States a much needed push into action. We want the Commission to come forward with proposals for EU level inspections and market surveillance and EU minimum standards for effective access to review by courts on compliance with environmental law. *"There's no point in having high standards if they are not being enforced," says Bas Eickhout,* member of the European Parliament's Dieselgate inquiry.

Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Ska Keller
See our Dieselgate section

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Greens/EFA objection to GM soya
Vote Wednesday

The Parliament voted on an objection to the import for use in food and feed of a GMO soybean. The objection, signed by MEPs from across the political spectrum, was led by the Greens/EFA group - there is no place for GMOs in a sustainable food system and that the needs of Europe's farmers and consumers should and can be met in a more effective and environmentally friendly way.

The Parliament voted in favour of the objection (433 votes in favour, 216 against, 31 abstentions) and consequently opposed the import of this new GM soybean into the EU.

Text adopted by EP
See our web article

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Militarisation of civilian conflict prevention tools/future misuse of development funds
Vote Thursday

For the Greens/EFA, it is completely unacceptable that the EU's only instrument for civilian conflict prevention (IcSP) risks being used for military security purposes. Security is important for development and stabilising of fragile countries, but we cannot accept that civilian instruments such as the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and funds of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) are militarised. The ECJ and some legal services have also stated that funding military capacity building via an instrument which is based on the development policy article, such as the IcSP, is illegal. See press releases on legal opinion and the vote in AFET committee.

The Foreign Affairs Committee voted to grant a mandate for inter-institutional negotiations (trilogue) without a plenary vote.

The Greens/EFA group initiated a plenary vote on the AFET mandate which follows the line of the Commission and pushes for the militarisation of the IcSP but a majority was in favour of going to trilogue (430 votes in favour, 157 against, 23 abstentions).

Our Group voted against the decision to enter into negotiations since they were of the the opinion that the mandate requires further parliamentary approval as the it is non-compliant with case-law of the ECJ..

Press release

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Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in the EU Institutions
Vote Thursday

The majority of MEPs of the European Parliament adopted a report from Green MEP Sven Giegold on "Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in the EU Institutions". Greens / EFA, Social Democrats and some member of EPP, ECR and ALDE groups backed the report.
"*The Parliament's demands now need to be implemented across the EU institutions*" said rapporteur Sven Giegold. This initiative report calls on the Commission to come up with rules regarding greater transparency in lobbying and stronger rules against revolving doors. The Legislative Footprint, requested by the European Parliament, will allow citizens to see at a glance who has been able to influence the drafting of EU legislation. The transparency register for lobbyists – which until now has been voluntary – will become more binding as lobbyists will have to register in order to gain access to legislators. However, it is shameful that MEPs want to keep looser standards for themselves than for employees of the EU Commission. On mandatory lobby transparency and stronger rules for revolving doors, the majority of MEPs decided to let themselves off the hook.

Plenary speech by rapporteur Sven Giegold
Text adopted by EP
Press release

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Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- Myanmar
- Cambodia
- Gabon
- Laos

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 6 October 2017

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Adriaan Ploegh



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