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Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 23-27 October 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Minute's silence for Daphne Caruana Galizia**
- **Protection of whistleblowers**
- **Extension of Glyphosate licence**
- **Biofuels: targets need to be genuinely sustainable**
- **GMOs: Parliament votes on 20th objection**
- **Action needed to ensure adequate minimum income**
- **Entry/Exit system "costly and disproportionate"**
- **Protecting workers from carcinogens**
- **Discharge of the Council EU budget**
- **Combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU**
- **Sakharov prize**

Debate and minute's silence for Daphne Caruana Galizia

Tuesday 24th

Following the shocking murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia, Green MEPs Eva Joly and Sven Giegold called Tuesday for the resignation of the Maltese government over its failure to properly investigate allegations of money laundering.

MEPs heard Council and Commission Statements on the protection of journalists and defence of the

freedom of media in Malta. A minute of silence in the presence of her family took place Tuesday. Daphne Caruana Galizia's work was crucial for uncovering the murky reality of corruption in Malta.

The fight of journalists and whistleblowers to make business more transparent is essential, but also terribly dangerous, even within the EU. That is why, to highlight their work and help ensure greater protection, the Green MEPs are proposing the idea of a "European prize for investigative journalism" in the name of Daphne Caruana Galizia and modelled on the Sakharov Prize.

Violence against journalists is deeply concerning and we urge the authorities to investigate swiftly and bring the perpetrators to justice.

- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Social media
- Plenary video - Sven Giegold on murdered journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia

Further information
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European Parliament demands urgent protection for whistleblowers

Debate Monday 23rd, vote Tuesday 24th

The European Parliament on Tuesday called on the Commission to urgently - by the end this year - propose an EU Directive that would protect whistleblowers in both the private and public sectors across the whole European Union. Almost all of the Greens/EFA demands were adopted by the majority of MEPs, including the need to protect whistleblowers who reveal not only illegal activity and corruption but information that is in the public interest or that reveals wrongdoing. Despite the resistance of the EPP and other groups on the right like the ECR, we managed to secure the freedom of whistleblowers to report to the press and also to ensure the rights of whistleblowers to report anonymously. In May 2016, the Greens/EFA Group published our own draft directive, which successfully kick-started the debate on whistleblower protection and led to the drafting of this report. It is now up to the Commission to step up and deliver.

- Text adopted
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Social media
- Greens/EFA Draft Directive to Protect Whistle-blowers

Further information
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Extension of Glyphosate licence

Plenary vote, Tuesday 24th / Standing Committee meeting Wednesday 25th

The European Parliament has demanded Tuesday an end to glyphosate. MEPs objected to the European Commission's proposal to extend the EU licence for glyphosate by ten years. It calls on the Commission not to renew the licence at the end of the year, and for the substance to be phased out entirely within five years. We have been campaigning hard on this for years and are delighted that the majority of MEPs have chosen to put health and the environment first. Wednesday, the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed failed to vote on the Commission proposal. A further meeting is foreseen in the near future.

- Text adopted
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Social media

Further information
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Biofuels: targets need to be genuinely sustainable

Vote in Environment Committee, Monday 23rd

The European Parliament's Environment Committee has backed Tuesday a report from Greens/EFA MEP Bas Eickhout that would see palm oil biofuels phased out in the EU from 2021. With few exceptions, food and feed crop biofuels end up displacing food production and have negative climate impacts that

sometimes even exceed fossil fuel emissions. If plenary follows the environment committee vote, we will have ensured that food-based biofuels will be phased out by 2030 with exception for agrofuels that can prove they do not have significant indirect climate impacts. The report forms a part of the revision to the Renewable Energy Directive. The ENVI committee has exclusive competence on provisions related to sustainability criteria for bioenergy, including greenhouse gas-accounting and indirect land use change. The report is due to be voted on in plenary in January.

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

Further information
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GMOs: Parliament votes on 20th objection

Vote Tuesday 24th

The European Parliament has successfully approved Tuesday three more objections to GMO authorizations for use in food and feed. These votes bring to 20 the number of parliamentary objections to GMOs in the last two years. The European Commission repeatedly struggles to find majority support from Member States for the authorisation of GMOs. The current approval system is clearly not fit for purpose, and needs to be urgently reformed.

Texts adopted

- Genetically modified maize 1507
- Genetically modified soybean 305423 × 40-3-2
- Genetically modified oilseed rapes MON 88302 × Ms8 × Rf3

- Blog post for our (anti) GMO campaign
- Social media

Further information

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Action needed at EU level to ensure adequate minimum income

Debate Monday 23rd, vote Tuesday 24th

MEPs adopted Tuesday a report on minimum income policies as a tool for fighting poverty by a large majority. In the EU, 119 million people in the EU - some 25% of the total population - are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. This initiative report calls on all Member States to introduce adequate minimum income schemes to ensure a life in dignity for all those who lack sufficient resources, accompanied by quality services and measures to facilitate entry or re-entry in the labour market for people in vulnerable situations, if they can work.

The text calls acknowledges that the European Economic and Social Committee's opinion calls for a framework directive – something we were pushing for - that sets common methodologies and principles, definitions and methods, to achieve a level playing field across Europe. Regrettably, the reference making it legally possible was deleted, which weakens the text considerably. Fortunately, the recommendation that minimum income schemes should be set above the poverty line remained in.

- Text adopted

Further information
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Entry/Exit system “costly and disproportionate”

Debate and vote Wednesday 25th

The final debate and vote on the agreement between the European Parliament and the Council on the entry/exit system took place Tuesday. For the Greens, the creation of the costly new database to record entries and exits of all third country nationals entering the Schengen area is neither necessary, nor proportionate. We believe it is highly doubtful that the proposal on the table is compatible with ECJ case law or fundamental EU rights. Despite this, the majority of MEPs look set to back this deal as it stands. The proposal stigmatises third country nationals as potential threats without any need to demonstrate individual suspicion and allows for unnecessarily long data retention periods. The funding would be more effectively spent on the supporting joint investigation teams and other kinds of cross-border cooperation. If adopted in its current form, there is a chance that European Court of Justice will strike it down as being incompatible with the Treaties.

- Text adopted
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Greens/EFA study - Data Retention under the Proposal for an EU Entry/Exit System (EES)
- Social media

Further information
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Protecting workers from carcinogens

Debate and vote Wednesday 25th

MEPs voted Wednesday on the final agreement on the revision to the directive on limiting exposure to carcinogens and mutagens at work. This report marks a vital step in reducing workers exposure to harmful substances. Every year, 100,000 people die as a result of an occupational cancer. It will extend medical supervision until after the end of the exposure, as there is evidence that diseases often develop years after exposure to toxic substances. The Commission will have to assess by the first quarter of 2019 if it will propose legislation covering substances that are harmful to reproduction. This has been a longstanding Green demand. Negotiations on the second strand will start this autumn and we want to see diesel included in the scope.

- Text adopted
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)

Further information
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Discharge of the Council EU budget

Debate Tuesday 24th, vote Wednesday 25th

The European Parliament voted Wednesday on the budget of the European Union for 2018. Within this report, our group has managed to secure a very strong position regarding MEP spending, a reform which must now be implemented. The Parliament adopted almost all of the green position on MEPs General Expenditure Allowance (GEA). Until now, the GEA was one of the few types of spending that did not have to be accounted for in any way. Our group has always pushed for more transparency and accountability in this regard. The text calls for the GEA should be handled in all cases in a separate bank account. All receipts pertaining to the GEA should be kept by Members. Finally, the unspent share of the GEA should be returned at the end of the mandate..

- Text adopted
- Greens/EFA position paper on general expenditure allowance

Further information
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Combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU

Debate Wednesday 25th, vote Thursday 26th

The European Parliament adopted Thursday, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution aimed at combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU. The text calls for strong measures such as a special task force to be set up in the Parliament as well as mandatory training for staff and MEPs on sexual harassment and abuse. Our group is united in saying no to sexual harassment! It's time to break the silence. We believe

in a zero tolerance policy and strongly condemn all forms of sexual violence and physical or psychological harassment and deplore the fact that they are too easily tolerated. We call on the European Commission to present a proposal for a directive on violence against women, which places the human rights and protection of all victims at its centre.

- Text adopted
- Greens/EFA motion for a resolution
- Plenary video #MeToo - Greens/EFA MEPs
- Social media

Further information
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Sakharov Prize

Decision by group presidents, Thursday 26th

The European Parliament has awarded the 2017 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the Democratic Opposition in Venezuela, which was nominated by the EPP and ALDE groups. The Greens/EFA Group had nominated Aura Lolita Chávez Ixcaquic, a Guatemalan environmental and human rights defender from the Maya Quiché people. She has been a powerful voice for the protection of women and indigenous rights against the threats posed by corporate interests. Lolita, together with the other nominee, Eritrean journalist Davit Isaak, will be invited to the Parliament for the award ceremony in December.

Further information
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