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News | 27.11.2020

Greens/EFA take on the plenary session

23-27 November

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Preparation of the Council: MFF

Following the Polish and Hungarian veto of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), Recovery Fund and Own Resources package over the rule of law, during this plenary the European Parliament discussed the preparation of the December European Council summit.
The Greens/EFA stand united behind the proposals that were previously agreed, and strongly condemn the Hungarian and Polish attempt to derail the Recovery Plan and MFF.

The Greens/EFA call on the Presidents of the Council and the Commission, as well as all EU leaders, to find a solution to this crisis that stands firm behind the rule of law and European values.

Philippe Lamberts MEP, President of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, has commented:

“It's shameful that Hungary and Poland are attempting to derail the entire Recovery Plan and MFF because their governments no longer stand for the values on which this Union is built. If Orbán's Hungary and Kaczyński's Poland were candidates to join the EU today they would be rejected. There is no European Union without European values, which include democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights.”

- Press Release with Philippe Lamberts
- Press Release on the MFF/Own Resources
- Video - Ska Keller
- Video - Jordi Solé
- Video - Rasmus Andresen
- Video - Marie Toussaint
- Video - Ernest Urtasun
- Video - Daniel Freund
- Video - Tineke Strik
- Video - Bas Eickhout
- Video - Micha Bloss
- Social Media - Ska Keller
- Social Media - Ska Keller
- Social Media - Ska Keller

Sustainable Single Market

This week, the European Parliament adopted a resolution proposing concrete measures to achieve a sustainable Single Market. This means a market focused on sustainable consumption and production - using fewer resources and producing less waste - in line with the European Green Deal. The Greens/EFA believe we can no longer allow producers to get away with creating products that are designed to break after a certain time, causing unnecessary and preventable waste. With this report, the Parliament calls for further consumer and climate protection thanks to new product standards by design: longevity and reparability, that will allow the consumer to enjoy products that last longer, thus creating less waste and less harm for the environment, and also setting the first steps towards a circular economy.

David Cormand MEP, Greens/EFA rapporteur on the report, commented:

"The adoption of our amendments on mandatory labelling on the durability of products and the inclusion of premature obsolescence in the blacklist of unfair commercial practices is a great victory for European consumers and for the planet. With the adoption of this report, the Parliament will set an unprecedented ambition to change rules that are currently based on waste, the unlimited exploitation of resources and the overconsumption of low quality products. This is a clear and ambitious line which I invite the Commission to include in their new consumer agenda."

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Video - David Cormand
- Video - Anna Cavazzini
- Video - Kim Van Sparrentak
- Social Media - Sustainable Market. Greens/EFA video with David Cormand
- EP's report "Towards a more sustainable market for businesses and consumers" (Greens/EFA MEP David Cormand IMCO rapporteur)

Tackling homelessness in the EU

On Monday MEPs voted, with an overwhelming majority of 647 in favour, to support a goal to end homelessness in the EU by 2030. The Greens/EFA group is strongly in favour and we call on the EU Commission to now take forward this goal in the frame of the action plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights. Our group has welcomed the resolution from the PETI Committee, which condemns the increasing homelessness rate in the EU caused by rising housing costs, reduced social protections and inadequate policies in many Member States, and particularly supports the call for the Commission to propose an EU Framework for National Homelessness Strategies. For the Greens/EFA group, access to housing is a fundamental right.

The resolution builds on the work done by Greens/EFA MEP, Kim van Sparrentak, as rapporteur on the report Access to decent and affordable housing for all, that will be voted next week in the EMPL committee and deals more widely with the housing crisis in Europe.

- Text adopted
- EP's report 'Access to a decent and affordable housing for all' (Green MEP Kim van Sparrentak EMPL rapporteur)
- Greens/EFA proposals to end homelessness by 2030
- Greens/EFA campaign 'A home for everyone is possible'

Industrial Strategy for Europe

The Parliament approved this own-initiative report that improves the Commission's strategy when it comes to tackling the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the consequent needed recovery, focused on reconstruction and resilience. The Commission published its text on 10 March and announced an update for 2021. The Parliament is now calling on the Commission to include in its strategy a clear and comprehensive policy framework that prioritises the green and digital transition, strengthens long-term competitiveness, reinforces the EU's social and economic resilience, and takes into account the gender dimension in the implementation of the strategy. The text also urges a rapid phase-out of fossil fuels and highlights the need to create an efficient and climate-neutral energy system at globally competitive prices for industry.

For the Greens/EFA, it is crucial to develop a green industrial policy under the auspices of the European Green Deal, which should include an explicit commitment to end coal and gas production, in line with the Paris Agreement.

Michael Bloss MEP, Greens/EFA group shadow rapporteur on the Industrial Strategy in the Industry, Research and Energy Committee, commented:

"The decarbonisation of our industry will pave the way to climate neutrality and create jobs. Protecting the climate is a job creator. We must switch from subsidising coal-fired power stations to investing in renewables. The Green Deal can make the European Union the market leader in energy-efficient and resource-saving industrial processes and cutting-edge technologies such as renewable energies, zero-emission steel and the production of electric cars.

- Text adopted
- Press release with MEP Micha Bloss

- Social Media - Industrial strategy
- Commission's Industrial Strategy

LGBTIQ Equality Strategy

On Wednesday, the European Parliament debated the Commission's new LGBTIQ Strategy, published on 12th November. Discrimination, violence, hate speech and harassment are a daily reality for many people in the LGBTIQ community, with half of all of European LGBTI people saying they are still discriminated against. In particular, the acceptance of transgender and intersex people remains very low. The Greens/EFA group showed strong support to the Commission's proposal to include gender-based and sexuality-based hate crimes in the list of EU recognised crimes, and welcomed the mutual recognition of parental rights across all EU countries.

Terry Reintke MEP, Vice-President of the Greens/EFA group and Co-President of the LGBTI intergroup in the European Parliament, has commented:

"The LGBTI strategy is being published at a crucial moment, when the community is currently facing repeated attacks in the European Union. The constitutional changes in Hungary are yet another major assault on fundamental rights and LGBTI people. The Polish government is running a hate-lead campaign against the LGBTI community and supports the declaration of whole regions as 'LGBTI-free zones'. The President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, must turn her words into action and sanction violations of the rule of law and human rights. These attacks against European values demonstrate the necessity of a well-functioning rule of law mechanism."

- LGBTIQ Strategy
- Greens/EFA Press Release
- Video - Terry Reintke
- Video - Alice Bah Kuhnke
- Video - Monika Vana

Pharmaceutical Strategy

The Greens/EFA group called for more transparency, a more efficient use of public funding and the avoidance of pharmaceutical monopolies during Thursday's debate on the Pharmaceutical Strategy presented by the Commission. Public funding for the development of medicine is fundamental to guaranteeing accessible and affordable medicine for all. The current situation, in which the development costs are black boxed and pharmaceutical companies can charge excessive prices while receiving public money, is both indefensible and untenable. The Greens/EFA have also criticised Commissioner Kyriakides' lack of urgency to redress the situation, as all the reviews of pharmaceutical legislation have been postponed until 2022.

Kim van Sparrentak MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

(IMCO) Committee, commented:

"We have known for years now that the current system of market exclusivities for pharmaceutical companies does not lead to better health care, but to excessive prices of medicines. If the Commission really wants to prioritize public health needs over the profits of big pharmaceutical companies, it has to put its words into action. If this Commission wants to ensure accessible and affordable medicines for all European citizens, the review of pharma legislation cannot be put on hold any longer."

- Press Release with MEPs Kim van Sparrentak and Tilly Metz
- Press Release with MEP Jutta Paulus
- Press Release with MEP Michèle Rivasi
- Video - Kim Van Sparrentak
- Video - Tilly Metz
- Social Media - Greens/EFA welcomes the EU Pharmaceutical Strategy

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Abortion Rights in Poland and debate on Istanbul Convention and Violence Against Women

On the International Day For the Elimination of Violence Against Women, November 25, the Parliament addressed the urgent situation of access to abortion and the Rule of Law in Poland, following the recent ruling of the Polish "Constitutional Tribunal", which de facto bans abortion in the country. This ruling comes amid severe concerns regarding the independence and legitimacy of the "Constitutional Tribunal" in Poland, as the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Venice Commission have previously expressed. The European Parliament approved with a big majority the resolution on abortion rights in Poland, giving a clear message of support to Polish women and other groups that are being discriminated against.

The Greens/EFA group considers the restrictions on access to abortion a violation of human rights. Greens/EFA MEPs have shown their solidarity with the protesters and denounced the drastic deterioration of the rule of law in Poland during the plenary, and they also joint the cross-party pro-choice campaign in the European Parliament "All of us" signing the letter calling the Commission to tackle the situation concerning Rule of Law and Women's rights in Poland.

Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, women are experiencing increasing violence and a huge backlash of their rights. The Greens/EFA group has called on the Commission and all Member States to take immediate and concrete action.

Sylwia Spurek MEP, Vice-Chair of the Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee, commented:

"It's been a year since the Parliament called on the Commission to include violence against women in the catalogue of rights and to ratify the Istanbul Convention and yet nothing has happened. The Commission and certain Member States have ignored the calls of the Parliament. It is the duty of the Commission, Member States and all of us to stand up for the rights of women. It is absolutely unacceptable that there are women in Europe today who are still not safe in their own homes and that there are still countries in the EU that call women's rights an ideology."

- Press Release
- Text adopted

- Video - Abortion Rights in Poland: Sylwia Spurek and Terry Rientke
- Video - Elimination of Violence Against Women: Sylwia Spurek
- Social Media: Elimination of Violence Against Women
- Social Media - All of us pro-choice Campaign: letter to the Commission.

Directive on “Representative Actions” - a milestone for consumer protection

The European Parliament endorsed the outcome of trilogue negotiations on the Directive on 'Representative actions to protect the collective interests of consumers'. Consumer organisations and independent public bodies will be able to bring claims in the name of consumers in courts in order to stop infringements and even to demand compensation, in what is known as 'collective redress'.

The Greens/EFA have called for this essential legislation since years. The Dieselgate scandal that exposed VW and other car companies cheating with their vehicle emissions made it clear that there is an urgent need for consumers to get together and bring collective action.

Heidi Hautala MEP was shadow rapporteur on the file in the Legal Affairs Committee and commented:

"This is a milestone for European consumer protection and an example of the power and influence of the EU law. Consumer organisations and independent public bodies will be able to bring actions to the courts, particularly when the financial sums involved are relatively small and would otherwise put off individual legal actions.” and added “This is just the beginning, in the future with the help of collective actions it should be possible to help the victims of forced labour and human trafficking to demand their compensation for the breach of their human rights”

- Text adopted
- Press release with MEP Heidi Hautala
- Press release with MEPs Anna Cavazzini and Sergey Lagodinsky
- Video - Heidi Hautala

Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- The deteriorating situation of human rights in Algeria, in particular the case of Khaled Drareni
- The continuous violations of human rights in Belarus, in particular the murder of Raman Bandarenka
- Situation in Ethiopia
- The de facto ban on the right to abortion in Poland
- The escalating tensions in Varosha following the illegal actions by Turkey and the urgent need for the resumption of talks

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