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Join the Food Revolution Newsletter

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Every month food actors who joined the ['Join the Food Revolution'](#) network share their story, showing the way to take back control over your plate –

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GREEN INSIGHT INTO EU FOOD POLICY

Novel Foods: Greens won't mess with citizens' health and freedom of choice

Novel food is defined as food that has not been consumed to a significant degree by humans in the EU prior to 1997. This definition remains unclear and there are real concerns about the impacts of these new types of foods on human health, the environment and animal welfare and we argue that the precautionary principle must be honoured.

On the other hand, the food industry stays very secretive about its work on the issue. This lack of transparency clearly impacts consumer's freedom of choice.

In 2014, Greens hailed the outcome of the committee vote, which included a clearer definition of novel food and a moratorium on 'nano-foods' until specific risk assessment methods enable EFSA to assess the use of nano-materials in food. On 28th October, when casting their vote in plenary, Green MEPs again highlighted their strong concerns over the use of nanotechnologies in foods. Because the Greens/EFA group will never allow to mess with citizens' health and freedom of choice.

[Read More](#)

Animal Welfare: A weak vote showing little appetite for improvement of animals' rights.

Despite the existing specific [Animal Welfare Strategy](#) for 2012-2015, the new Commission has shown very little appetite for action on animal welfare issues, with major delays on key action points, and no official word on the publication of an updated overarching strategy: all showing great disrespect for [Article 13 of TFEU](#), which recognises animals as sentient beings and requires full regard to be given to the welfare requirements of animals in EU policy.

To this date, the EU legislation on animal welfare is not being properly enforced, and deadlines for action are being missed. 15 Member States did not meet the deadline for banning battery cages by the start of 2012 (despite having 13 years to implement the legislation), 17 failed to meet the deadline to ban sow stalls at the start of 2013, and a Commission evaluation of the animal transport regulation in 2011 concluded that there is still wide variations in application of the laws between Member States. Almost nothing has been done to ensure the EU animal welfare standards are incorporated into trade agreements, even with other developed countries like the USA.

The Oral Question on the agenda of the plenary last week addressed the upcoming expiry of the time period of the European Commission's: it asks the Commission to draw up a new strategy for 2016-2020 to

continue developments in EU animal welfare policy, and reiterates a long-standing demand of the European Parliament - as expressed in [two resolutions](#) passed the last mandate - for the Commission to fulfil its promise in the 2012-2015 Strategy to bring forward a new updated legislative framework for animal welfare in the European Union. Unfortunately, Commissioner's answer to the oral question was deeply unhelpful. Commissioner Andriukaitis insisted that completing the actions of the existing animal welfare strategy for 2012-2015 is to be done first, with strengthening existing laws the priority. He then stated that there would be a Eurobarometer survey in 2016 on animal welfare, and that the Commission would only decide on next steps after that. This follows his reassurances in late 2014 that the Commission would decide on its animal welfare approach in 2015

The 4 largest political groups (EPP, S&D, ECR and ALDE) agreed to complement this oral question with a joint parliamentary resolution. The Greens/EFA did not sign it. The majority of members voted in favour of the text but Green MEPs voted against, as most of our amendments were rejected.

While the text of the [resolution](#) calls for a new strategy, the lack of specific details in the resolution suggests that this strategy will not have much content. It does call for an updated legislative framework, but this does not provide the guarantees of our Green position, for a specific animal welfare framework law providing basic protections for all categories of animals.

It also excludes our amendments aiming, for example to improve legislative requirements for pigs (end surgical castration by 2020, increase minimum space requirements, incentivise the use of partially slatted floors, and promote loose housing in farrowing pens) and on funding for scientific research on better slaughter practices for poultry and pigs. It does not take into account our call for revision of animal transport rules. Eventually, the resolution does not call third countries to comply with European animal welfare rules in bilateral agreement, such as the currently negotiated EU-US agreement, [TTIP](#).

This weak resolution clearly demonstrates how the rhetoric of the largest political groups on animal welfare is not matched by their voting record.

[See here results of the vote by political groups](#)

Why Soil matters: 1st harvest from the Greens/EFA conference of 18th November

On 18th November, the Greens/EFA group held its annual food related conference with a focus on soil. Soil is a living ecosystem, which is essential for human and environmental health. A healthy living soil sustains biodiversity, protects and nourishes crops and contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation. But soil is under threat today. We lose an estimated 24 billion tons of fertile soil each year. On the occasion of the UN Year of Soil, this event was the opportunity to bring the issue back on the European political agenda: Why Soils matter? What can we do at EU level to assure a healthy living soil, basis of our food systems and essential to prevent climate change? These were the questions raised throughout the conference.

As 1st fruitful harvest from this event, you will find here first information, highlighting the main issues discussed.

Enjoy and feel free to share them, in particular this Saturday 5 December, on the occasion of the World Soil Day.

[Video with interviews of speakers](#)

Cartoon: 'Why Soil matters?' Available in [EN](#), [DE](#), [FR](#), [NL](#)

[Full Webstream of the event](#)

Presentations of speakers available on the [event webpage](#)

A short report on the conference will also be ready soon.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Call for contributions on agroecological transitions

The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) opens a call for contributions on the topic of agroecological transitions.

IPES-Food is seeking inputs from a wide range of food systems actors to help inform two of its upcoming reports: 1) a review of the challenges and opportunities for diversifying agriculture and food systems; 2) a set of case studies on transitions to agroecology.

The e-consultation takes the form of a short questionnaire, in which respondents are asked to give their insights on the key challenges in shifting towards diversified and agroecological food and farming systems. Responses should be sent by 11th December 2015.

The e-consultation can be accessed in English, French, Spanish.

New study shows that EU ban on neonicotinoids should become permanent

Findings from the latest study by the Royal Holloway University of London show that exposure to neonicotinoid pesticides can impair the ability of bees to provide pollination services, with important implications for both the sustained delivery of stable crop yields and the functioning of natural ecosystems.

This study provides evidence of a direct link between decreased pollination and neonicotinoids. As the [2-year ban](#) on neonicotinoid is coming to an end, there is no reason to procrastinate anymore: neonicotinoid pesticides must be banned permanently.

[Read study here](#)

[Read our press release](#) (in FR)

Glyphosate warnings played down by EFSA

On 12th November, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) issued its re-evaluation of the controversial substance glyphosate, by far the most used pesticide worldwide. The EFSA opinion, which recommends reapproval differs with the findings of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) International Agency for Research on Cancer, which concluded that glyphosate is probably carcinogenic to humans. EFSA's evaluation comes ahead of a decision by the European Commission next year on whether to reapprove glyphosate for use in the EU. The Greens/EFA believe it would be grossly irresponsible to renew the approval for a substance the WHO has found to be strongly harming for human health.

On 1st December morning, the Environment committee of the European Parliament will hold an exchange

of view on the re-authorisation of glyphosate. The same day, Greens/EFA group organises a lunch debate to discuss with experts the pros and cons of the re-authorisation.

[Read our press release](#)

[More information on the lunch debate on Glyphosate organised by the Greens](#)

[Article from Corporate Europe Observatory on the issue](#)

JOIN THE FOOD REVOLUTION: THE STORY OF THE MONTH

Brigitte holds a degree in dietetics and is passionate about everything related to food and nutrition. She also believes that plants are the ideal complement to a balanced diet and are invaluable to our health and well-being. Brigitte's interest is not only theoretical. She loves cooking and eating good food and keeps pleasure as a core concept in her projects. Get to know more about [Brigitte](#) and [Join the Food Revolution](#) yourself!

WHAT'S ON THE PLATE?

1/12:

- Exchange of views on the EU-authorisation on glyphosate in [ENVI Committee](#)
- Greens/EFA lunch debate on the state of the EU-authorisation on [glyphosate](#)
- Hearing on the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in the [Development committee](#) of the European Parliament.

2/12: Movie screening [Cowspiracy](#) in the European Parliament.

Registration [here](#)

4/12: Closing event of the [International Year of Soils](#) "Healthy soil for healthy life", Brussels.

5/12: World Soil Day

7/12: Event [Cool the Planet, Feed the World](#): The Power of Regenerative Food and Farming to Save the Planet, Paris, France.

9/12: [Climate and Food Conference](#), Paris, France.

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Press release

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