

Belarus OUT (Photo by Leonid Shcheglov / BELTA / AFP)

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News | 10.12.2021

## **Plenary Flash 13-16 December 2021**

### **Greens/EFA priorities for the plenary session**

#### **EMERGENCY MEASURES TO ‘RE-DIRECT’ ASYLUM SEEKERS ON THE EXTERNAL BORDERS WITH BELARUS**

On the initiative of the Greens/EFA Group, the Parliament will debate the European Commission’s recently announced proposed measures to tackle the situation on the Belarusian borders. The proposals will allow Poland, Lithuania and Latvia to ‘re-direct’ asylum seekers to a formal border crossing point, where they can be detained for up to 16 weeks. They also further reduce the reception conditions these Member States must grant asylum seekers, allow them to apply asylum procedures with fewer safeguards and to delay the registration of asylum claims for up to four weeks. This does nothing to prevent the current practice of pushbacks, which sends asylum seekers, including families, under inhumane circumstances to Belarus with no access to protection. The practice of pushbacks is banned under the Geneva Convention.

The Greens/EFA Group demand the Commission change course and come out with a plan that respects human rights and the right to asylum.

#### **Greens/EFA MEP: Tineke Strik**

Council and Commission Statement: Wednesday, 15 December

More: [Commission plans tantamount to endorsing pushbacks](#)

#### **DIGITAL MARKETS ACT**

In December 2020 the European Commission published, together with the Digital Services Act, a proposal which lays down harmonised rules aiming at regulating the behaviour of digital platforms. Due to their increasing network effects and control over the entire digital ecosystem, these platforms act as gatekeepers and prevent new market entrants from competing with them. Such practices by very few large digital companies such as Facebook, Google, Apple, Amazon and Microsoft, negatively impact competition and

innovation across the single market and limit consumer choice. The Digital Markets Act aims to regulate gatekeepers and enable more fairness in the single market for both businesses and end-users.

Next week's vote will set up the Parliament's position before trilogue negotiations start. With this report, the European Parliament has reinforced the initial proposal of the Commission to the benefit of consumers. The Greens/EFA Group pushed in this report for a ban on targeted advertising, in this particular context on minors, and for some interoperability provisions, enabling users to communicate with contacts on WhatsApp even if they are using Signal. Internal market rules must put the interest of consumers at the centre.

**Greens/EFA MEPs: Marcel Kolaja, Rasmus Andresen**

Debate: Tuesday, 14 December

Final vote: Wednesday, 15 December

## **SITUATION AT THE UKRAINIAN BORDER**

Tensions between Ukraine and Russia are on the rise, with continuous reports of a Russian troop build-up at the Ukrainian border. During the upcoming plenary, the Greens/EFA call on the EU to respond to any further aggressions with resolute countermeasures. The EU and its Member States must communicate very clearly to Russia and President Putin the costs of any potential attack, including further sanctions, the freezing of oil and gas imports from Russia and stopping the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.

The Greens/EFA fully support Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and call on Russia to immediately cease its provocations on the Ukrainian border. Provocations have a destabilising effect for the whole region and beyond. Russia must stop all measures that further aggravate the conflict and instead de-escalate tensions in line with its international obligations.

**Greens/EFA MEP: Viola von Cramon**

Debate: Tuesday 14 December

Final vote: Thursday 16 December

## **COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: CYBERVIOLENCE**

The increasing reach of the internet, the rapid spread of mobile information and the use of social media has resulted in the proliferation of gender-based cyberviolence. This online form of gender-based violence is a continuum of the one that takes place offline and tends to be more severe for vulnerable people, such as women belonging to racialized communities, women with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ people. The absence of a harmonised definition of gender-based cyberviolence at EU level has led to differences in the way Member States tackle it.

The Greens/EFA have been calling for a comprehensive Directive covering all forms of gender-based violence, including cyberviolence, as we consider it is the best way to put an end to gender-based violence.

**Greens/EFA MEP: Sylwia Spurek**

Debate/ Vote: Debate Monday 13 December

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE AND HEALTH RIGHTS IN POLAND

In the last few weeks, several very worrying legislative initiatives have been tabled in Poland that seriously threaten sexual and reproductive health and rights. The measures include a proposal by the Polish government to create a pregnancy 'registry' that would amount to surveillance of women. The Polish Parliament, or Sejm, has also taken the first step in approving a bill that will create an Institute for Family and Demography, which could decide over whether to grant a divorce and would be able to bring cases against LGBTIQ+ parents, as well as collect data on pregnancies and miscarriages. The Sejm also debated a bill that would ban all abortions, without exception, and would mandate lengthy prison terms for women and care providers in cases of abortion.

These latest initiatives are part of a long decline in the rule of law in Poland and the undermining of fundamental rights. The Greens/EFA Group called for this debate and will continue to call on the Commission and Council to use all possible tools available to preserve the rule of law in Poland and to protect fundamental rights, and sexual and reproductive health rights.

**Greens/EFA MEPs: Sylwia Spurek, Terry Reintke**

Debate: Wednesday 15 December

More: [Joint Letter - Concerns over breaches of the rule of law and further restrictions of fundamental rights in Poland](#)

## MORE

- **An EU ban on the use of wild animals in circuses**  
MEP: Eleonora Evi  
Oral Question: Thursday, 16 December
- **Award of the Sakharov Prize**  
Wednesday 12:00 - 12:30  
More: [Sakharov Prize 2021: the nominees](#)
- **Fundamental rights and Rule of Law in Slovenia**  
MEP: Tineke Strik  
Vote: Monday, 13 December
- **State of play of the RRF (Recovery and Resilience Facility)**  
MEP: Damian Boeselager  
Council and Commission Statements: Wednesday, 15 December  
[Joint letter to Commission from political groups on Polish RRP](#)
- **The impact of organised crime on own resources of the EU and on the misuse of EU funds**  
MEP: Michèle Rivasi  
Debate: Monday, 13 December  
Vote: Tuesday, 14 December
- **Report on the Implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and upcoming Revision**  
MEPs: Eleonora Evi (Report), Ciarán Cuffe (Revision)  
Debate: Monday, 13 December  
Vote: Wednesday, 15 December
- **Revision of the Directive to be presented by the Commission on Tuesday, 14 December**  
[MEP's letter calling for an ambitious revision of the EPBD, signed by Ciarán Cuffe and Eleonora Evi on behalf of the Greens/EFA](#)

## LINKS

- Greens/EFA Presidents Ska Keller and Philippe Lamberts will hold a plenary session press briefing on Tuesday at 10.40 in the Daphne Caruana Galicia Press Room in Strasbourg.
- The full plenary agenda for the week can be found on the Parliament website [here](#).
- The plenary sessions can be followed [live here](#).

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