European Union

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News | 15.10.2021

Plenary Flash 18-21 October 2021

Greens/EFA priorities for the part-session

POLAND: RULE OF LAW CRISIS AND ABORTION BAN

Last week's ruling by the Polish government controlled 'Constitutional Tribunal' over the primacy of EU law vs national law flies in the face of the EU Treaties. The primacy of EU law over national law is one of the cornerstone principles of the European Union and essential for fundamental rights and the proper legal functioning of the Union. The 'Constitutional Tribunal' has increasingly lost its political independence over the last five years. The judgement has aggravated the already worrying rule of law crisis in Poland and further contributed to the erosion of European values. The Greens/EFA Group called for the debate on Tuesday with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. The ruling demonstrates how the judiciary is not sufficiently independent and therefore why the EU cannot guarantee that EU law will be properly enforced in Poland. So long as serious questions over the independence of the judiciary remain, the Greens/EFA Group are calling for the national Recovery Plan (RRF) not to be approved and for sanctions on EU funds going to Poland.

The plenary session will also hold a debate on the first year since the de facto abortion ban in Poland. It has been a year since 'Constitutional Tribunal' effectively outlawed abortion in Poland, in an clear attack on women's rights that was condemned by the Greens/EFA group and the European Parliament, and was met with protests of Polish citizens. Independent Polish judges and attorneys as well as pro-choice activists will be in Strasbourg next week.

Debate Constitutional Crisis: Tuesday, 19 October,
Vote Constitutional Crisis: Thursday, 21 October,
Debate Abortion Ban: Wednesday, 20 October,
Press conference with Polish judges and attorneys: Monday, October 18,
Press conference with pro-choice activists: Wednesday, October 20.

Greens/EFA MEPs: Terry Reintke

More: Remote participation

FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

After the failure to deliver a Common Agricultural Policy fit for the challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity loss, the Farm to Fork Strategy is the last chance for the EU to attempt to improve food production in Europe. In May 2020, the Commission published the Strategy as the food and farming arm of the European Green Deal and aims to drive the sustainable transformation of food production. The strategy lists 27 actions covering food production, processing, retailing and waste, and as such propose a rather comprehensive, although not exhaustive, take on the EU food system. The Strategy must be at the heart of the implementation of the CAP implementation and will have far-reaching implications for the multiple links between people, planet and health. The Greens/EFA Group supports the parliaments position and calls for binding national targets for the use of pesticides and stronger regulation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Date debate, date vote: Monday October 18, 17:00 - 20:00

Greens/EFA MEPs: Sarah Wiener, Tilly Metz

UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN GLASGOW, UK (COP26)

The upcoming COP26 summit will define whether or not countries will be able to reach their climate targets and how we fund the transition of our economies. Ahead of COP26, MEPs will vote on the mandate for the Parliament’s delegation to Glasgow. The latest science confirms that we are likely to reach 1.5°C global warming already somewhere around 2030 without urgent action. Mid-century "net-zero" commitments need to be backed up by concrete and binding short term decarbonisation plans across all sectors of the economy. The draft resolution includes important calls supported by the Greens/EFA group, recognising that fossil fuels have no long-term role in the EU's energy mix and that Member States should adopt national phase out plans as soon as possible in order to reach climate-neutrality by 2050. It also supports moving from ten to five year climate targets to speed up emissions reduction, and calls for a substantial increase in climate finance. Thanks to the Greens/EFA Group, the resolution calls on the UK Presidency to make every effort possible to ensure that developing countries and civil society are able to attend COP26 despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

Debate: Wednesday October 20
Vote: Wednesday October 20

Greens/EFA MEPs: Pär Holmgren, Bas Eickhout

GLOBAL TAX DEAL AND PANDORA PAPERS

On Wednesday afternoon, on the initiative of the Greens/EFA group, the Parliament will debate the global tax deal as endorsed by the G20 Ministers of Finance on the 13th of October. As part of this deal, 136 jurisdictions have agreed on a new set of tax rules for multinational companies. It is the first time in history that so many countries are involved in high-level tax negotiations. The global tax deal will oblige the world's largest and most profitable companies to pay more taxes in countries where they do business. Most importantly, the deal includes a minimum effective tax rate of 15% for large companies. The Greens/EFA Group have long called for a minimum effective tax rate to end the practice of multinationals not paying their fair share. At the end of October, the global tax deal will be endorsed at the G20 Summit in Rome.

On Thursday, the Parliament will vote on a resolution condemning the role of secrecy jurisdictions in money laundering and tax evasion. The Greens/EFA Group are calling on the G20 leaders summit at the end of October to act on money laundering and the exchange of tax information. The Greens/EFA Group initiated the Pandora Papers debate from last plenary session and this session's resolution.

Global Tax Deal Debate: Wednesday
Pandora Papers Vote: Thursday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Kira Peter-Hansen, Sven Giegold, Ernest Urtasun

GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022

The European Commission formally adopted the draft Budget 2022 on 9 July 2021. Next Tuesday and Wednesday, the Parliament will debate and vote on the EU's general budget for next year. Thanks to the efforts of the Greens/EFA Group, the text as it stands priotises research, youth and the implementation of Green Deal in the budget, while reinforcing administrative capacity for the proper implementation of the RRF. After the plenary vote, the next step will be the budget conciliation procedure between the three institutions. The budget is expected to be adopted before the end of the year.

Debate: Tuesday October 19
Vote: Wednesday October 20

Greens/EFA MEPs: Henrike Hahn, Damian Boeselager,

FRONTEX

In April 2021, the Parliament postponed the 2019 discharge for the EU's border agency, Frontex, and requested additional clarifications and corrective measures on the way the agency carries out its activities and manages its finances, recruitment and procurement procedures. On October 19 Parliament's plenary will vote on whether to grant or refuse the discharge to Frontex for the year 2019, before negotiations begin with the Council to reach an agreement on next year's EU budget by 15 November.

While Frontex has made improvements in some of the scrutinised areas, the Greens/EFA Group believes that not enough effort has been put into tackling the most significant irregularities and therefore the Agency should not be granted discharge. Among the outstanding issues remain transparency, recruitment of Fundamental Rights Officers, ongoing OLAF investigations and excessive costs of legal fees.

Even though the Parliament strengthened the "fundamental rights dimension" of the instrument and gave more importance to measures related to search and rescue operations and the issuance of humanitarian visas, the Greens/EFA Group remains very concerned about serious allegations of human rights violations involving both Frontex and Member States.

Debate: Thursday October 21
Vote: Thursday October 21

Greens/EFA MEPs: Bas Eickhout (CONT), Tineke Strik (LIBE)

MORE

Pandora Papers: implications on the efforts to combat money laundering, tax evasion and avoidance
MEP: Sven Giegold, Mikuláš Peksa
Vote: Tuesday, 19 October,
More

Europol's Mandate Reform
MEP: Saskia Bricmont
Vote: Tuesday October 19,

The rise of right-wing extremism and racism in Europe (in light of recent events in Rome)

LINKS

- Terry Reintke MEP will hold a press conference on the situation in Poland with Polish judges and lawyers on Monday at 17.30 in the Daphne Caruana Galizia press conference 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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