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Plenary Flash - 21-24 November 2022

Greens/EFA priorities for the plenary session

The need to find solutions on asylum and migration including search and rescue

On Wednesday, MEPs will debate the need to better address asylum and migration. The debate takes place against the backdrop of an increasing unwillingness of Member States to rescue people in distress at sea, and the Greens/EFA Group is especially concerned with the lack of government-led search-and-rescue efforts in the Mediterranean.

Today, EU efforts mainly concentrate on funneling money towards third countries such as Libya in an attempt to prevent people from fleeing ,and NGOs are criminalized for saving lives when governments are not meeting their obligations. Search and rescue vessels still face closed off ports, despite international legal obligations to save lives at sea, and the fact that everyone rescued must be able to disembark as soon as possible in the closest port of safety. This is far from good enough. The Greens/EFA are strongly in favour of solidarity and relocation between member states, and no country should be left alone in dealing with a disproportionate number of people arriving. However, the top priority in situations like the one currently unfolding in the Mediterranean must be to save lives,and the responsibility to rescue and ensure safe disembarkation remains with member states concerned.

Debate: Wednesday, 23 November
Greens/EFA MEP: Tineke Strik, Erik Marquardt

State of play of the negotiations between the Commission and the Hungarian Government linked to the Conditionality Regulation and the RRP

After over a decade of undermining independent institutions, the Hungarian government has proposed a series of 17 measures on anti-corruption reforms, following the triggering of the Rule of Law Conditionality Mechanism. However, these reforms have yet to be implemented and it is unclear how

effective they will be in practice so long as the judiciary remains far from independent. The credibility of the EU rests with its ability to uphold the rule of law and democratic standards as set out in the Treaties. The Greens/EFA Group calls on the Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, to continue with the Mechanism process for Hungary when it presents its assessment of the measures at the end of the month. The Council must also stand up for the rule of law and the protection of the EU budget if it comes to a vote in the ECOFIN council on December 6th.

Debate: Monday, 21 November
Vote: Thursday, 24 November
Greens/EFA MEPs: Daniel Freund, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Damian Boeselager

Women on boards

On Tuesday, MEPs will debate the Gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges, otherwise known as the “Women on Boards” Directive. The Directive, after the final round of trilogues, sets a minimum objective of 40% women among non-executive board members or 33% women among executive and non-executive board members. This Directive is long overdue, as still today, as little as one in ten board members across the EU are female. The directive requires companies to introduce pre-established, clear, neutrally formulated and unambiguous criteria in selection procedures.

The Commission originally presented the Directive in 2012, but was blocked by the Council until now. Although the ten-year old text of the Directive is already outdated, and the Directive contains a suspension clause allowing countries to avoid implementation, it is still a huge leap forward for gender equality in the EU. The Greens/EFA welcome this long-awaited step.

Debate: Tuesday, 22 November
Vote: Wednesday, 23 November
Greens/EFA MEP: Terry Reintke, Heidi Hautala

Biodiversity COP15

On Wednesday, MEPs will debate on the COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held from 7 to 19 December in Montreal, Canada. The COP15 aims to set up a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that will guide actions to protect and restore nature until 2030. The previous framework failed to achieve its objectives, as none of the targets agreed in 2010 were fully met by 2020.

The loss of biodiversity is accelerating, propelled by economic activities linked to the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, and - to a lesser degree the sectors of transport, energy and industry. All countries need to contribute to the conservation and restoration of nature. Financial support to developing countries is an important component of a global biodiversity deal, both for the monitoring and implementation of the deal.

As the European Parliament discusses its expectations for the Biodiversity COP15 and the EU's responsibility, the Greens/EFA Group will emphasize that the loss of nature is a serious threat to all life on earth. To make COP15 a success, the Greens/EFA Group urge that the new global framework provides for the effective protection and equitable governance of “at least 30 percent” of global land and sea area, and agrees on a well-resourced, solid plan for how to achieve the targets.

Debate: Wednesday, 23 November
Greens/EFA MEP: Ville Niinistö

Budget 2023

This week, negotiators from the European Parliament, Council and Commission reached an agreement on the EU's budget for 2023. The Greens/EFA Group has secured increased support for measures aimed at dealing with the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis and the climate crisis. Compared to the draft budget, an extra €1 billion was allocated to the Parliament's priorities, including an increase of €280m for Neighbourhood Policy, €30m for the EU's environmental programme 'LIFE', and €7.5m for health policy, as well as top-ups on EU programmes such as rights and values, Erasmus and CEF transport and energy. The plenary will vote on the budget for 2023 on Wednesday.

Vote: Wednesday 23 November
Greens/EFA MEPs: Francisco Guerreira, Alexandra Geese
More: Agreement on budget shows focus in times of crisis

Legal protection for rainbow families exercising free movement

On Wednesday, MEPs will debate the legal protection of rainbow families exercising the right to free movement. The debate will focus on the implementation - or rather lack thereof - by some Member States of judgements of the Court of Justice regarding LGBTIQ families. These judgements state that if one Member State recognises parental relationship, all Member States must follow suit, and Member States cannot use national law to refuse to issue identity cards.

However, in several instances this has proven not to be respected by Member States. The Court cases include an instance of a citizenship request that was denied by Bulgarian authorities who argued that an individual could not have two mothers, and a case where Polish authorities would not issue an identity card to the daughter of two mothers, arguing it would contravene Polish law. The Greens/EFA Group call on the Commission to guarantee the freedom of movement for rainbow families.

Debate: Wednesday, 23 November
Greens/EFA MEP: Terry Reintke
More: Question for oral answer

MORE:

- **New EU strategy for enlargement**
  Debate: Tuesday, 22 November

- **Situation of human rights in the context of the upcoming FIFA world cup in Qatar**
  Debate: Monday, 21 November

- **Energy Charter Treaty**
  Debate: Thursday, 24 November

- **Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy - EU response to the increasing crackdown on protests in Iran**
  Debate: Tuesday, 22 November

LINKS

- Group Presidents, **Terry Reintke** and **Philippe Lamberts** will hold the plenary session press briefing at Tuesday, 22 November at 10:40.
- 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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