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Plenary Flash 26 - 29 February

GREENS/EFA priorities for the plenary session

On the agenda this week: Nature Restoration Law, protection of the environment through criminal law, Alexei Navalny, data collection and sharing by short-term accommodation services, detergent Regulation, protection of journalists and human rights defenders and the Ukraine.

Nature Restoration Law: Final vote on bringing back nature

Biodiversity is key to our survival. Without intact ecosystems, there is no drinking water, no clean air, no fertile soils. The Nature Restoration Law will provide the EU with an important building block to mitigate the climate crisis and adapt to climate change. What threatens agriculture and livelihoods most is climate change. We are facing increasingly dramatic droughts, fires and floods, the extinction of species and the destruction of nature. The EU needs to demonstrate international credibility by sticking to the Montréal Biodiversity Agreement. The Greens/EFA urge all Members of the European Parliament to support the deal found in trilogue negotiations, and call on the EPP in particular to stay the course of the European Green Deal. The EPP now has the chance to show they are reliable allies of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's Green Deal. This vote will also be a test for the Commission President: can she count on her own ranks to back her core project?

Vote: Tuesday, 27 Jan
MEP: Jutta Paulus

Protection of the environment through criminal law

On Tuesday, MEPs will vote on the final agreement on the environmental crime directive. This Directive outlines criminal offences, puts forward sanctions to protect the environment more effectively and puts an end to environmental impunity in the EU.
With this new text, the European Union is adopting some of the most ambitious legislation in the world to

fight environmental crimes more effectively. It increases the number of environmental offences from 8 to 20 compared to the 2008 Directive.
Thanks to the Greens/EFA , the final text includes a new provision on 'qualified offences' which allows for more severe punishment in Member States when these offences cause destruction, or widespread and substantial, irreversible or long-lasting damage to an ecosystem, an habitat or the quality of air, soil or water. These qualified offences are also defined as comparable to ecocide.

This new legislation is also taking a crucial step towards making environmental crimes autonomous by establishing that behaviours that impact the environment can be prosecuted under criminal law.
The new Directive also harmonises and sets minimum and maximum sanctions for both natural and legal persons. The text also improves access to justice, to information, and strengthens the role of civil society, the enforcement chain and cross-border cooperation in fighting environmental crimes.
Debate: Monday, 26 Feb
Vote: Tuesday 27 Feb
MEP: Marie Toussaint

The murder of Alexei Navalny

Following the murder of Alexei Navalny by the Russian authorities last Friday, Members of the European Parliament will hear from Yulia Navalnaya and debate the need for EU action in support of political prisoners and oppressed civil society in Russia. The Greens/EFA call for the immediate return of Alexei Navalny's body to his family as well as an independent investigation into his death. The EU needs to stand with independent civil society and against political persecution. We continue to call for the release of all political prisoners and for the Commission and Member States to increase support to Russian human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists and independent journalists.
Debate: Wednesday, 28 Feb
Vote: Thursday, 29 Feb
MEPs: Terry Reintke, Philippe Lamberts, Sergey Lagodinsky

Data collection and sharing by short-termaccommodation services

MEPs will debate and vote on the trilogue deal on data collection on short-term rentals. The recent growth of short-term rental accommodation services such as Airbnb and Booking,com is contributing to the housing shortage in big cities and popular tourist destinations, consequently increasing housing prices and impacting the liveability of neighbourhoods. Occasional renting out of spare rooms has turned into a full-blown business model driven by investors. Regulation on access and provisions of short-term rentals have already been implemented at national and local level. However, platforms have been unwilling to share data on the rentals. With this regulation, the collection and access to such data will be improved, allowing local authorities to enforce the rules and thereby improve access to affordable housing. The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the deal reached in trilogue, which includes harmonising registration requirements for hosts, clarifying rules to ensure registration numbers are displayed and checked, an obligation for the platforms to combat illegal rentals by performing random checks and streamlining data-sharing between online platforms and public authorities.

Debate: Wednesday, 28 Feb
Vote: Thursday, 29 February
MEPs: Kim Van Sparrentak

Detergent Regulation: eco-friendlier washing powder and cleaning products

Toxic substances in washing powder and cleaning products harm the health of people and animals and pollute our drinking water. The Members of the Environment Committee voted with a massive majority for a strong negotiation mandate. It urges for less phosphates and phosphorus for the first time also in industrial detergents, easily understandable and legible labelling directly on the packaging, clear information on the correct dosage, and the end of animal testing for washing powder and cleaning products. To achieve better biodegradability, MEPs call for the removal of persistent substances which can remain in the environment for decades. The Greens/EFA urge for the Parliament to vote in favour of this mandate, which would protect our waters, strengthen the rights of consumers and for improve animal welfare.

Debate: Monday, 26 February
Vote: Tuesday, 27 February
MEP: Manuela Ripa (EP Rapporteur)

Protection of journalists and human rights defenders from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings

Next Tuesday, MEPs will vote on the outcome of trilogue negotiations on the Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) Directive. SLAPPs are a particular form of harassment increasingly used against journalists and others, such as environmental and human rights defenders and whistleblowers. The Greens/EFA Group have long fought for an end to the use of SLAPPs, which can be used by governments, corporations or powerful individuals against critical voices. Although incomplete and imperfect, the agreed text is a first step towards better protection for those who speak out, and complements the EU's Whistleblowing Directive. It introduces specific safeguard mechanisms, both inside and outside the courtroom, to protect victims against the heavy costs of SLAPPs in terms of psychological and financial damage. The Greens/EFA Group also improved the text on information and transparency as well as data collection provisions. However, the opposition of Member States on compensation for victims of SLAPPs and on broadening the cross-border definition of cases is disappointing. The SLAPPs Directive is a first in the EU; no Member State has specific legislation against SLAPPs.

Vote: Tuesday, 27 February
MEPs: Marie Toussaint (JURI), Diana Riba i Giner (LIBE), Viola von Cramon (CULT)
More: Greens/EFA welcomes vote to protect against strategic lawsuits

Ukraine

Saturday marks the second anniversary of Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war against Ukraine. Next week, MEPs will mark the anniversary with a joint motion on the need for unwavering EU support for Ukraine after two years of Russia's war of aggression. MEPs will also vote on the proposal for the establishment of the Ukraine Facility, as part of the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which is urgently needed for Kyiv to be able to continue in its fight. The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the facility, which will ensure the EU's continued financial support for Ukraine with €50 bn in loans and grants for the period of 2024 to 2027. The Greens/EFA Group have improved the legal text by ensuring democratic participation in the implementation of the Facility, earmarking for green investments, for SMEs and subnational authorities, and for respecting EU environmental and transparency standards, as

far as is possible in a war-torn country. The Greens/EFA Group calls on the EU and all western allies to continue their steadfast support for Ukraine and accelerate their military assistance.
Debate and vote: Tuesday (facility), Wednesday (EU support for Ukraine)
Greens/EFA MEPs: Viola von Cramon (AFET) and Damian Boeselager (BUDG)

MORE

Shipment of waste
Next week, MEPs will vote on the shipment of waste directive. The exporting of EU waste to third countries has disastrous consequences for both workers and the environment. It is time for the EU to take ownership of our waste problem, without placing this burden on third countries.

Vote: Tuesday, 27 February
MEP: Sara Matthieu

Food price inflation
On Monday, on the initiative of the Greens/EFA Group, MEPs will debate the rising cost of food price inflation, its social consequences and its root causes.
Debate: Monday, 26 Feb
MEPs: Benoit Biteau, Martin Hausling, Philippe Lamberts

Gaza
On Tuesday, MEPs will debate the ongoing war in the Gaza strip, the recent decision by the ICJ and the developments in UNRWA. The Greens/EFA reiterate their call for a permanent ceasefire and for the EU to use all the tools at its disposal to bring an end to this conflict and alleviate the unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza.
Debate: Tuesday, 27 Feb
MEPs: Jordi Solé

MMF Revision
The MFF revision will allow for stable and predictable financing for Ukraine as well as a solution to cover the shortfall for the Next Generation EU borrowing costs. The MFF revision is needed, however some problematic elements remain in particular as it cuts flagship programmes such as Horizon and EU4Health. The revision also lacks the flexibility to address unforeseen needs, and fails to provide the resources needed for a European industrial policy to underpin the green transition.
Vote: Tuesday, 27 Feb
MEPs: Rasmus Andressen (MFF & STEP), Henrike Hahn (STEP)

Need to overcome the Council deadlock on the platform workers directive
On Monday, MEPs will debate the need to overcome the Council deadlock on the platform workers directive. It is estimated that at least 4 million of people working through digital labour platforms are misclassified as self-employed instead of employees. This allows digital labour platforms to evade labour, tax and social security legislation that apply to employees. The vote in Coreper which took place earlier in

February was not successful due to the negative vote of France and the abstention of Germany, Greece and Estonia. The Greens/EFA Group calls for an end to this deadlock, to ensure every worker is compensated fairly and can work safely.
Debate: Monday, 26 Feb
MEPs: Kim Van Sparrentak

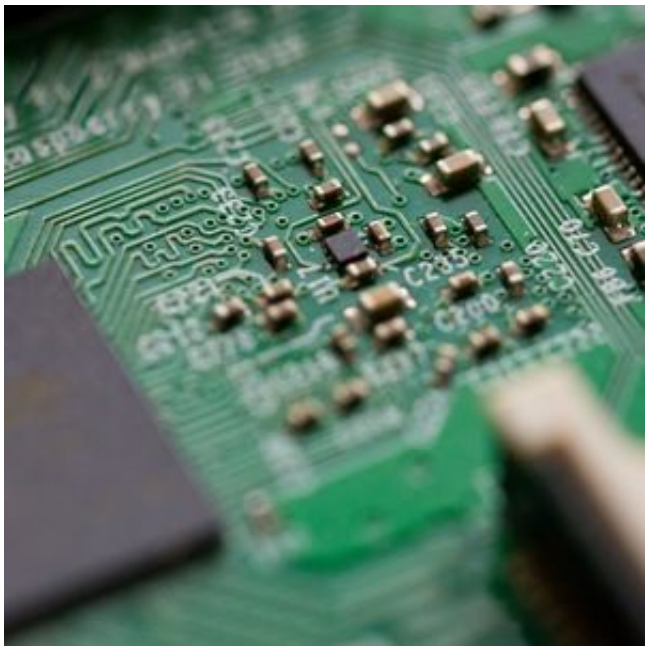
LINKS

- Group Presidents, **Terry Reintke** and **Philippe Lamberts** will hold the plenary session press briefing on Tuesday, 27 February at 11:00 AM.
- **Location:** Daphne Caruana Galizia Press Room, Weiss N-1/201 or online via European Parliament website. Journalists can ask questions remotely via Interactio.
- The full plenary agenda for the week can be found on the Parliament website.

Recommended

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Opinion

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Contact person



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Harassment Prevention and Response Officer

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