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Plenary Flash 7 - 10 March 2022

Greens/EFA priorities for the plenary session

Council and Commission statements - The deterioration of the situation of refugees as a consequence of the Russian aggression against Ukraine
And
Topical debate on the EU's role in a changing world and the security situation of Europe following the Russian aggression and invasion on Ukraine, with Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas

The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the European Parliament's clear language on condemning the Kremlin's war of aggression against Ukraine and the solidarity expressed with Ukraine, following Tuesday's extraordinary plenary session and resolution. The Russian President is responsible for all violence against civilians and all those who died defending their country against the invasion and for people fleeing the country. We also stand with the courageous people in Russia who are protesting the war while taking a great personal risk in raising their voices for peace, freedom and democracy.

EU Member States need to reduce their dependence on Russian gas and oil and invest massively in renewable energies to build up energy sovereignty. The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the Council's adoption of the Commission's proposal to trigger the Temporary Protection Directive and to offer swift protection to both Ukrainians and non-Ukranians fleeing Ukraine. However, we deeply regret that not all third-country nationals are automatically covered by the Council Decision. We strongly condemn any form of racism on either side of the border as well as the intention of some Member States to exclude non-Ukrainians from protection. We urge Member States to interpret the provisions of the Directive generously by granting an unconditional right to family reunification, and we call on the Commission to issue detailed guidelines to this end.

Debates: Tuesday, 8 March, from 15:00 on and Wednesday, 9 March, from 10:30 on
Greens/EFA MEPs: Sergey Lagodinsky, Viola von Cramon, Heidi Hautala, Yannick Jadot
More: European Parliament condemns Russian war of aggression and calls for tough sanctions
Greens/EFA welcome agreement on special measures for refugees fleeing Ukraine

Report on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union, including disinformation

Across Europe and the globe, malicious interference undermines the institutions that make up our democracies by affecting elections, social media platforms, public bodies, universities, political funding and public opinion. The report of the special committee on foreign interference (INGE) refers to evidence from several EU countries, as well as the 2016 US election and the Brexit referendum. Global anti-democratic actors such as Russia and China continue to use nefarious tactics to undermine democracy and the rule of law.

To counter this, over the last year and a half, MEPs on the special committee of foreign interference have held hearings and debates, building a basis for the committee's final report, which sets out recommendations for resilience in the fight against disinformation and foreign interference, including the need for legal sanctions, the closing of existing policy loopholes and the protection of elections and areas of critical infrastructure. The report includes proposals from the Greens/EFA Group for an improved institutional framework in the EU and enhanced coordination. After the report is adopted, the Commission and EEAS are expected to come out with a series of proposals.

Debate: Tuesday, 8 March, 09:00-12:30
Final Vote: Wednesday, 9 March
Greens/EFA MEPs: Viola von Cramon

International Women's Day

Tuesday, 8 March, is International Women's Day where the Green/EFA Group will be focusing on women, peace and security. The past year, women’s rights have declined in many parts of the EU and beyond. Poland's repressive abortion laws, the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and the situation facing women as a result of Putin's war on Ukraine are all tragic examples of this. The European Parliament will highlight International Women's Day in several ways, including a special International Women’s day debate during which Olga Tokarczuk, Nobel Prize in Literature Laureate, and women from Ukraine will address the European Parliament.

The Commission is expected to publish its proposal for the long-awaited Gender Based Violence (GBV) directive. The Greens/EFA call for a proposal wherein GBV is understood as all forms of violence against women and girls, as well as LGBTIQ+ people, on the grounds of gender, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics. This proposal is long awaited and we call on the Commission to criminalise all forms of gender based violence, including, among others, femicide, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, cyber violence, rape, early and forced marriage. The Istanbul Convention should be the minimum standard for Member States.

The Parliament will also debate the bi-annual report on Gender Mainstreaming within the European Parliament for which Greens/EFA MEP Gwendoline Delbos Corfield is rapporteur. This report responds to a regular exercise by the FEMM committee to assess Parliament’s functioning in relation to gender equality and makes recommendations for improvement. It is time for a real political commitment, with concrete targets, to ensure gender mainstreaming in the EP. We have successfully pushed for, among other things, gender balanced lists in the electoral law, mandatory training for MEPs on prevention against harassment, and a call to recognise maternity, paternity and parental leave for Members in the final report.

In addition, the Members of the European Parliament will vote on the External Gender Action Plan III report.

Debate: Tuesday, 8 March
Vote: Tuesday, 8 March
Greens/EFA MEPs: Terry Reintke, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (European Parliament Rapporteur), Dr. Sylwia Spurek, Diana Riba i Giner
More: Greens/EFA Key demands for the Gender Based Violence directive

General Union Environment Action Programme 2030

On Wednesday (9 March), MEPs will debate and vote on the outcome of the trilogue negotiations on the General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030 (the '8th EAP'). The legally binding 8th EAP sets the direction for EU environmental and climate policy action until 2030, building on the European Green Deal and laying down the conditions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. With Grace O'Sullivan MEP as rapporteur, the Greens/EFA Group have delivered on a programme that will help catalyse and monitor systemic change towards a sustainable wellbeing economy. Ambitious 'enabling conditions' to be put in place include the development of a dashboard and indicator measuring 'Beyond GDP', setting a deadline for the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies, consistent with the ambition of limiting global warming to 1.5C, as well as a methodology to be set out by the Commission by the end of 2023 to identify other environmentally harmful subsidies, to be used as a basis for phasing them out.

Next week's adoption of the final outcome by Parliament comes shortly after the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which once again warned of the devastating consequences of climate change Furthermore, the final text adds a governance mechanism to the 8th EAP, requiring an annual exchange between the Parliament, Council and Commission to assess progress made toward the 8th EAP objectives.

Debate: Wednesday, 9 March, afternoon
Vote: Wednesday, 9 March, evening
Greens/EFA MEPs: Grace O'Sullivan (European Parliament Rapporteur)

Revision of battery legislation

On Wednesday (9 March), the European Parliament will vote on the Parliament's position on the EU regulation on batteries and waste batteries which ensures that batteries circulating in the EU market become more sustainable. The Greens/EFA Group incorporated several key elements: Battery manufacturers will be required to calculate and report on the carbon footprint, performance and durability of their batteries, allowing consumers to choose from higher quality batteries. The proposal further foresees significantly higher recycling targets and a right to repair for consumers. The Greens/EFA also ensured that the regulation includes ambitious human rights and environmental due diligence provisions for the battery value chain.

Current battery legislation has focused on their waste management, with only some provisions related to the products themselves, such as the restriction of hazardous substances and labelling. The new proposal takes a comprehensive approach across the whole lifecycle.

Debate: Wednesday, 9 March, afternoon

Vote: Wednesday, 9 March, evening
Greens/EFA MEPs: Malte Gallée, Anna Cavazzini, Manuela Ripa

Report on the role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism

On Tuesday 8 March, the European Parliament will adopt Greens/EFA MEP Salima Yenbou's report on the role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism. The plenary debate will take place on Monday afternoon.

The report, adopted by a large majority in the CULT committee, addresses the issue of structural racism as one of the main challenges facing the EU. It describes how culture, sport, media and education can help fight racism and discrimination to achieve a truly equal Union. This report complements the European Commission's EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (ARAP) which contains a roadmap for actions to be implemented at EU level. The Greens/EFA Group calls for a horizontal approach to tackling racism, taking into account intersectional discrimination facilitated by the collection of equality data disaggregated by racial and ethnic origin, and ensuring inclusive and accurate education, more diversity and representation, and addressing the need for cultural restitution.

Debate: Monday, 7 March, evening
Vote: Tuesday, 8 March, afternoon
Greens/EFA MEP: Salima Yenbou (European Parliament Rapporteur)

Citizenship and residence by investment schemes

With the current Russian war against Ukraine, the case of Russian politicians and oligarchs purchasing luxury goods, homes, and passports in Europe has once again come under the spotlight. Countries such as Cyprus, Malta and Bulgaria have been selling EU citizenship, and other countries such as Portugal and Greece have sold EU residency, both via investment schemes, with too little scrutiny and accountability. Such citizenship and residence investment programmes, or 'golden passports' and 'golden visas', pose security, social and democratic risks for the EU. These schemes run the risk that criminals and corrupt politicians can launder their cash and their identity through the European Union. The Greens/EFA Group have long called for the Commission to take action to ban these schemes through better regulating residency by investment programmes and phasing out golden passports.

Date & vote: Tuesday, 8 March
Greens/EFA MEPs: Saskia Bricmont
More: Golden Passports - Commission launches proceedings against Malta & Cyprus

MORE

- **The Rule of Law and the consequences of the ECJ ruling - vote**
  During the last Plenary session in February, the European Court of Justice rejected a case brought to Court by the Polish and Hungarian governments against the Rule of Law Conditionality Mechanism. The rejection by the Court reaffirmed that the Mechanism is in line with EU law. The Greens/EFA Group are calling on the Commission to take the rule of law crisis seriously and

launch the Mechanism without delay.
Vote: Wednesday, 9 March (debate took place during previous plenary)
MEP: Terry Reintke, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Daniel Freund, Sergey Lagodinsky
More: ECJ ruling shows urgent need for Commission to launch rule of law action

- **Setting up a committee of enquiry to investigate the use of the Pegasus and equivalent surveillance spyware**
  On Wednesday, Members will vote on setting up an inquiry committee into the Pegasus spyware scandal, following the revelations on the use, including in the EU by Member States, of illegal and abusive cyber surveillance against lawyers, politicians, activists and human rights defenders. The Greens/EFA Group have called for an inquiry committee to look into the extent of these practices, establish which states may be using such tools and to better protect people against cyber surveillance.
  Vote: Wednesday, 9 March
  MEP: Saskia Bricmont
  More: Pegasus: Greens/EFA Group call for inquiry committee

- **Commission statement - The need for an ambitious EU Strategy for sustainable textiles (debate without resolution)**
  Debate: Thursday, 10 March
  MEP: Alice Bah Kuhnke

- **Shrinking space for civil society**
  Debate: Monday, 7 March
  Vote: Tuesday, 8 March
  MEP: Erik Marquardt

LINKS

- Group Presidents, **Ska Keller** and **Philippe Lamberts** will hold the presidential press briefing on Tuesday at 10:30.
- 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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