News | 22.03.2019

# What's coming up in Parliament

## Greens/EFA priorities - plenary session 25-28 March 2019

**Copyright Directive**
*Debate and vote on Tuesday, 26 March*

On Tuesday, MEPs will have a final chance to make a stand against potentially cumbersome infringements to freedom of expression online. For the Greens/EFA group, the Copyright directive, specifically Article 11 on the link tax, and Article 13 on upload filters, poses a serious threat to online freedom of expression, access to information and the right to privacy. The scale of public opposition to this directive has been growing by the day, with over 5 million signatures for a petition against Article 13 and demonstrations in major European cities taking place on 23 March. The text in its current form threatens users, small businesses and a free and open internet. We urge all MEPs to vote against Articles 11 and 13.

More: **A vote for a Digital Single Market, a vote for an open and free internet for all**

**European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund**
*Debate Tuesday 26, March, vote Wednesday, 27 March*

EU regional funds are essential for the development and prosperity of some of the EU's poorest regions. However, potential changes to the EDRF and Cohesion funds look to undermine, rather than improve the future of Europe’s regions. The proposed text allows for the ERDF and Cohesion Fund to be spent on projects that threaten the climate - an outcome far from the European Commission’s original proposal for a 2021-2027 budget geared towards sustainable investment and excluding harmful spending. Unfortunately, following the lead of conservative groups and backed by socialist MEPs, the REGI committee voted in favour of allowing these funds to be spent on fossil fuels, landfills, and road and airport infrastructure projects, with huge consequences for the environment and people's health. Our group will works towards substantive changes to this misguided approach.

**Framework for sustainable investment**

*Debate and vote on Thursday, 28 March*

On Thursday, the European Parliament will vote on proposals from Greens/EFA rapporteur, Bas Eickhout, to make the financial sector more sustainable and shift financial flows from the most polluting sectors to cleaner ones, where more investment is needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. The ambitious proposals to stimulate green investment and counter “greenwashing” reached a majority in the joint Economic Affairs and Environment committees. However, a right-wing majority weakened the proposals and deleted in particular our proposal to pinpoint the most damaging sectors. For the Greens/EFA group it is clear that we must bring financial flows in line with the global climate goals, and that sustainable investment needs to become the norm, not the exception.

**Final report of the TAX3 committee**
*Debate on Monday, 25 March, vote on Tuesday, 26 March*

The final report and amendments of the Special Committee on Financial Crimes, Tax Evasion and Tax Avoidance will be voted in plenary next week. The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the report and calls for the establishment of a permanent sub-committee on tax and financial crimes to continue its investigative work. We have tabled amendments asking for the introduction of minimum effective tax rates paid by companies in the EU, the exclusion of any tax advisers caught in tax scandals from advising EU institutions, and for the update of EU public procurement rules to rules to include tax transparency in the criteria to award public procurement contracts.

**Time to end modern slavery in the transport sector**
*Debate and vote on Wednesday, 27 March*

MEPs will vote on Wednesday on the mobility package, which spans three files on social conditions for workers in road transport (lorries, buses and coaches) from driving and rest times, to rules on international deliveries and fair remuneration of drivers. As it stands, our group will vote to remove it from the agenda, due to irreconcilable views in the house. If the vote does go ahead, we will table a single amendment to reject the Commission proposal on posting, which exempts very vulnerable workers from the basic protections laid out in the Posting of Workers Directive. We will also vote to reign in 'nomadic driving' across Europe and give drivers decent weekend rest and returns home. Fatigue is a major cause of accidents on the road. We must deliver on the promise of a social Europe with equal rights and equal pay for equal work.

**Recent developments on the Dieselgate scandal, with resolution**
*Debate on Monday, 25 March and vote on Thursday, 28 March*

Dieselgate is once again back on the European Parliament’s agenda, and is very much a case of unfinished business. Now more than three years since the scandal broke, there are still over 43 million polluting diesel vehicles on our roads. The current EU strategy falls short of the action needed to properly address the Dieselgate legacy. Most action now lies with the Member States, many of whom seem more willing to defend industry over public health. With a revised legislative proposal now expected in mid-April, the Greens/EFA group urges *the European Commission to ensure the car industry finally complies with NOx emission limits agreed 11 years ago.* Action is urgently required to tackle one of the main sources of air pollution in Europe and reduce hundreds of thousands of premature deaths every year.

**Debate on the rule of law in Malta and Slovakia**
*Monday, 25 March, 17:00*

On the initiative of the LIBE committee and with the support of the Greens/EFA group, a plenary debate on the state of the rule of law in the EU - with a focus on Malta and Slovakia - will be held on Monday. This follows the work of LIBE's rule of law monitoring group and its missions to Malta and Slovakia. The resolution will be voted in April. The Greens/EFA Group calls on Malta to ensure an independent investigation into the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia; similarly, Slovak authorities must ensure a full investigation of the murders of Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnirová. The Greens/EFA group demands that the two countries ensure the safety of journalists operating there.

**Votes on the 2017 'discharge'**
*Debates and votes on Tuesday, 26 March*

The plenary will vote on the so-called discharge procedure, looking at how the EU's budget was spent for the year 2017. Although there were some slight improvements on previous years, the Greens/EFA group have tabled amendments to push the European Parliament toward greater transparency around MEPs expenses, for a stronger focus on performance-based budgeting, gender balance in positions, harassment training and better staff management. The Greens/EFA Group have also used the discharge procedure to tackle ethics questions from other institutions, including around the Selmayr-gate hiring incident in the European Commission and the conflict of interest scandal engulfing Czech PM Andrej Babiš. This is the last opportunity for the Parliament to prove its willingness to improve on issues of expenses, harassment and gender balance ahead of the EU elections.

**Common rules for the internal market in electricity**
*Debate on Monday, 25 March and vote on Tuesday, 26 March*

This file strengthens rights of consumers and is a step ahead in the fight against energy poverty. The Greens/EFA group is overall supportive of the proposed legislation since it will allow consumers to switch energy suppliers easily and quickly, enjoy transparency in billing and metering practices, thus creating more diversity in what is a top-heavy energy market. What is more, it is now enshrined that citizens can engage in energy communities. Our group will vote in favour as these new rules enable active citizen engagement in the energy transition, supporting efforts to tackle climate change.

**Next week, Parliament is also set to endorse the outcome of several trilogues:**

- Reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment: debate and vote on Wednesday, 27 March
- Establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021-2027): Debate and vote on Thursday, 28 March
- Erasmus, the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport: debate and vote on Thursday, 28 March

**Presidents Press briefing**
*Tuesday, 10:30am*

Ska Keller and Philippe Lamberts will present the Greens/EFA priorities for the plenary week in the Daphne Caruana Galizia room in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

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