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News | 20.10.2017

## What's coming up in Parliament

### Strasbourg Flash 23-27 October 2017

#### Priorities

- **Minute's silence for Daphne Caruana Galizia**
- **Protection of whistleblowers**
- **Glyphosate: MEPs and Member States to vote on extension**
- **Biofuels: targets need to be genuinely sustainable**
- **GMOs: Parliament votes on 20th objection**
- **Action needed to ensure adequate minimum income**
- **Entry/Exit system “costly and disproportionate”**
- **Protecting workers from carcinogens**
- **Sakharov prize**
- **Discharge of the Council EU budget**

#### Greens/EFA events

- **Press briefing with Greens/EFA co-presidents**
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#### **Debate and minute's silence for Daphne Caruana Galizia Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>**

Following the shocking murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia, the parliament will hear Council and Commission Statements on the protection of journalists and defence of the freedom of media in Malta. A minute of silence in the presence of her son will take place at midday. Daphne Caruana Galizia's work was crucial for uncovering the murky reality of corruption in Malta. Violence against journalists is deeply concerning and we urge the authorities to investigate swiftly and bring the perpetrators to justice.

## **Protection of whistleblowers**

**Debate Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, vote Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>**

Whistleblowers serve a vital role and it is clearly in the public interest that they receive adequate protection. However, the [convictions of the LuxLeaks whistleblowers](#) and others shows that this is not the case in reality. This report includes a range of excellent proposals, including horizontal protection that would cover both private and public sectors, defence of freedom of the press and the right of whistleblowers to report anonymously. We've published our [own draft directive](#) in May 2016 and we hope that the Commission will respond to this call with a legislative proposal by early next year.

## **Glyphosate: MEPs and Member States to vote on extension**

**Plenary vote, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> / Standing Committee vote Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>**

MEPs will vote on an objection to the Commission's proposal to extend the EU licence for glyphosate by ten years. The objection, already supported in the Environment committee, says that the licence should not be renewed at the end of the year, and that the substance should be phased out entirely within three years. This non-binding vote comes the day before the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed vote on the proposals. They are not expected to give them the needed qualified majority. This would leave the final decision with the Commission.

## **Biofuels: targets need to be genuinely sustainable**

**Vote in Environment Committee, Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>**

This report will set targets for biofuel use for 2030. There is currently a 7% cap on biofuels from food, which the Commission has proposed reducing to 3.8%. However, this would have next to no impact on the current EU levels. We're pushing for a reduction to 0% but with no limit for genuinely sustainable biofuels. This would see palm oil phased out entirely in EU. For the first time, there will also be biomass targets. We want criteria to ensure that only genuinely sustainable biomass is included in the targets, so that we don't simply see coal plants burning trees in an effort to meet sustainability targets.

## **GMOs: Parliament votes on 20<sup>th</sup> objection**

**Vote Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>**

These votes bring to twenty the number of parliamentary objections to GMOs. The European Commission repeatedly struggles to find majority support from Member States for the authorisation of GMOs. The current approval system is clearly not fit for purpose, and needs to be urgently reformed.

## **Action needed at EU level to ensure adequate minimum income**

**Debate Monday 23<sup>rd</sup>, vote Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>**

119 million people in the EU - some 25% of the total population - are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. This initiative report calls on all Member States to introduce adequate minimum income schemes to ensure a life in dignity for all those who lack sufficient resources. We would like to see the Commission introduce a framework directive that sets common methodologies and principles, definitions

and methods, to achieve a level playing field across Europe.

### **Entry/Exit system “costly and disproportionate”**

**Debate and vote Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>**

The creation of the costly new database to record entries and exits of all third country nationals entering the Schengen area is neither necessary, nor proportionate. The proposal stigmatises third country nationals as potential threats without any need to demonstrate individual suspicion and allows for unnecessarily long data retention periods. The funding would be more effectively spent on the supporting joint investigation teams and other kinds of cross-border cooperation. If adopted in its current form, there is a chance that European Court of Justice will strike it down as being incompatible with the Treaties.

### **Protecting workers from carcinogens**

**Debate and vote Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>**

Every year, 100,000 people die as a result of an occupational cancer. This directive marks a vital step in reducing workers exposure to harmful substances. It will extend medical supervision until after the end of the exposure, as there is evidence that diseases often develop years after exposure to toxic substances. The Commission will have to assess by the first quarter of 2019 if it will propose legislation covering substances that are harmful to reproduction. This has been a longstanding Green demand. Negotiations on the second strand will start this autumn and we want to see diesel included in the scope.

### **Sakharov Prize**

**Decision by group presidents, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>**

The group presidents will meet to agree the winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. The shortlisted candidates are: the Democratic Opposition in Venezuela, Eritrean journalist Davit Isaak and Aura Lolita Chávez Ixcaquic, a Guatemalan environmental and human rights defender from the Maya Quiché people. Aura Lolita Chávez was [nominated by the Greens/EFA group](#). She has been a powerful voice for the protection of women and indigenous rights against the threats posed by corporate interests.

### **Discharge of the Council EU budget**

**Debate Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>, vote Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>**

In April, the parliament postponed the discharge of the Council for the 7th year in a row, the result of a long-lasting refusal by the Council to cooperate on the discharge procedure. While the parliament looks set to vote against the discharge again, it seems an end to this long-running dispute is finally in sight. This year, **Bart Staes** is rapporteur for the Council's discharge - he is proposing that the Parliament and Council negotiate a new agreement, which would allow for oversight of the budget while taking on board the Council's concerns. See [our blog](#) for all the details.

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### **Co-presidents press briefing**

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> – 10.30-10.50, EP press room LOW N -1/201**

Press briefing with Greens/EFA co-presidents **Ska Keller** and **Philippe Lamberts** on the key issues of the session for the Greens/EFA group. Also live-streamed on our website.

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