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Commission must hold its ground on the Green Deal

State of the European Union

Today, the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, gave her annual State of the European Union speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

Philippe Lamberts MEP, President of Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, comments:

"The Green Deal proposed by Commission President von der Leyen in 2019 marked a turning point, as for the first time in its history, the European Union made the fight against climate change a top priority. Against all odds, the Green Deal has withstood the pandemic and the war that has rocked the EU.

"Unsurprisingly, those who never embraced the Green Deal are now calling for a moratorium. Despite the alarm bells from scientists, fires, floods and extreme weather phenomena directly linked to global warming, some European leaders are calling for the Green Deal to be suspended on the pretext of saving our economy. Faced with narrow-minded and irresponsible electioneering, the Commission will have to fight to stay on course for the long-term. We cannot content ourselves with implementing what has already been decided, primarily because that will not be enough to meet the 1.5°C global warming target.

"The political viability of the European Green Deal will depend on our ability to ask more of those who have more and less of those who have less. If there are limits to what we can do to our planet, there are just as many limits to the injustices that our societies can tolerate. The financial crisis, the euro crisis, the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis - it's always ordinary people who pay while rent-seekers get infinitely richer. As Christine Lagarde has identified, the growing profits of big business over the last two years are the main contributor to inflation in Europe. The Commision must rebalance the social order by using the financial regulation that falls within its remit as a lever. Nature, common goods, energy and housing are not simply financial assets that can be left to the whims of the market, they are public necessities."

Terry Reintke MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, comments:

"European Commission President von der Leyen made some flowery proclamations in her address, including a lot about promoting business and industry. The Commission President remained vague when it came to concrete public investments: We need massive investments in wind power, solar plants and batteries, and the widely announced solidarity pot must finally be filled.

“With the Green Deal, the EU has presented a mammoth project for climate protection and for the EU as a business and industrial leader. The transition to renewable energies and green technologies is the hallmark of the EU. The Greens/EFA Group has consistently delivered and will continue to fight for people and planet.

“Climate protection and investments in our economic and industrial competitiveness promote prosperity and confidence in the EU at a time when people suffer from inflation and a cost of living crisis.

“The Greens/EFA Group call on the EPP to stop dithering and fear-mongering. Standing shoulder to shoulder with the far-right, as they did with the failed attempt to block the Nature Restoration Law, only drives people into the arms of populists.

"Unfortunately, we have seen little initiative from the Commission President on a social Europe. A dignified life for all is a basic prerequisite for social cohesion in the EU and for public trust in European politics. We call on President von der Leyen to present a proposal for an EU minimum income."

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