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Greens/EFA presidents on the Bulgarian Presidency and the visit of the Irish Prime Minister

Future of Europe

The European Parliament will today hold two key debates:

- Presentation of the programme of activities of the Bulgarian Presidency, with Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Boyko Borissov
- Debate on the Future of Europe with the Taoiseach of Ireland, Leo Varadkar

Greens/EFA co-president **Ska Keller**, who will speak for the group in the **debate on the Bulgarian Presidency**, calls on the presidency to live up to their motto, "United We Stand Strong":

"I hope that the Bulgarian Presidency will bring its motto to life and strengthen European cohesion. Important reforms such as the strengthening of the euro, a solidarity-based and humane asylum system and better climate protection are on the agenda this year. The only way we can achieve that is for everyone to work together.

"The Bulgarian Presidency must not close its eyes to attacks on fundamental rights and should work to ensure that the rule of law applies equally in all EU Member States. We stand with all the Bulgarian citizens that are taking to the streets against corruption and the commercial exploitation of Pirin National Park."

Greens/EFA co-president **Philippe Lamberts**, who will speak for the group in the **debate with the Irish Prime Minister**, comments:

"Ireland is arguably the Member State that will be most affected by Brexit, not just for economic reasons but more crucially because this is about peace on the island. Letting violence erupt again in Ireland would not just spell disaster for the concerned communities: it would be an arrow through the heart of the European Union, which was and remains a peace project.

"Brexit is a challenge we could have avoided and it should not distract us from those challenges that are existential to the future of the EU. We need to find ways to live within the constraints that nature sets us. The Irish government has been sorely lacking in ambition on tackling climate change, opposing the Waste Reduction Bill proposed by the Irish Greens, which would help bring the country in line with the best practices in the EU. With its abundant resources of renewable energy, Ireland has the potential to be a pioneer in the ecological transition of our economy. The future prosperity of Ireland and of Europe depend on it.

"If we want our single market and our single currency to thrive and to benefit all and not just the richest, we have to stop this race to the bottom on taxation and on social protection. Ireland should be at the core of efforts to better cooperate on tax matters in order to give tax justice a chance in Europe."

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