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Press release | 27.11.2019

Neither blank cheque nor a red card

Greens/EFA abstain on the vote of the new Commission

The Greens/EFA Group abstained from today's vote on the new European Commission. The Greens/EFA are very concerned about the selection of Commissioners from Hungary, France and Croatia and are extremely critical of the linking of the title 'promoting our European way of life' with migration policy. The new European Commission lacks the courage to make substantial changes in agricultural and trade policy, without which it cannot successfully implement a green deal for the people of the European Union. Ursula von der Leyen must keep her election promises and make this Commission the Climate Commission. The Greens/EFA group will keep the door open for constructive cooperation on major challenges such as combating the climate crisis. The new Commission will start on December 1st.

Ska Keller, President of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, comments:

"Our voting behaviour is a sign of goodwill despite fundamental criticisms. We have clear reservations about some elected Commissioners but we are equally committed to constructive cooperation in order to make the European Union more ecological and social.

"While there are strong Commissioners, we have great concerns about others and their roles. For example, a Viktor Orbán loyalist will be in charge of ensuring candidate countries comply with the rule of law and European values, while Hungary remains under the Article 7 procedure. The former head of one of Europe's largest digital companies will be responsible for the EU digital market, among other things, which can create a massive conflict of interests.

"The President of the Commission has announced that she is in favour of more climate protection and we hope that this will be translated into action. We demand that Ursula von der Leyen makes this Commission the climate Commission. There can be no continuation of business as usual in agriculture if we are to meet the needs of the environment, we need a complete reform of the Common Agricultural Policy now. We congratulate President von der Leyen and the new Commission and look forward to working together."

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

"While President Von der Leyen decided not to invite the Greens/EFA to be part of her majority, we look forward to being partners whenever the new Commission will take serious initiatives to tackle climate change,

to strengthen the rule of law and to reduce social inequalities. When it comes to saving the planet from climate catastrophe the EU needs to be far more ambitious: our future is at stake.

"If we are not issuing a red card even before the new Commission starts to work, we are neither giving it a blank cheque. Bold statements are no substitute for real action on the ground. If the von der Leyen Commission is serious about engaging Europe in a Green Deal, it cannot at the same time pursue the same policies as before. As an example, trade policies whose stated purpose is to increase global trade flows are totally contradictory with the goal of reducing our ecological footprint. We will hold this Commission to account and test its seriousness on the coherence of its legislative proposals. What we need is a paradigm shift, not tinkering at the edges of the system."

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