European Union

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Plenary Flash 11-14 December 2023

Greens/EFA Priorities 11-14 December 2023

EUROPEAN COUNCIL SUMMIT

Next Wednesday, MEPs will debate the upcoming European Council Summit (EUCO), taking place in Brussels on December 14 & 15. At the EUCO, EU leaders are scheduled to discuss a range of pressing issues for the bloc including: Ukraine, the Middle East, the MFF, and enlargement. Ahead of the EUCO summit, Hungarian PM Viktor Orban is threatening to block assistance to Ukraine and Kyiv's progress towards EU membership. The Greens/EFA Group calls on EU leaders not to give in to Orban's blackmailing tactics and to push ahead with EU support for Ukraine. Philippe Lamberts will attend the summit, should you wish to arrange interviews, please do not hesitate to get in touch.
Debate: Wednesday, 13 December, EUCO 14 & 15 December.
Greens/EFA MEP: Philippe Lamberts
More: EUCO agenda

FISCAL RULES

Next Monday, MEPs will vote on the reform of the EU's fiscal rules during an ad hoc sitting of the ECON Committee. Europe urgently needs a departure from the counter-productive and inconsistently-applied 'Stability and Growth Pact.' However, the reform of the fiscal rules as it stands is overly focused on debt reduction and will lead to further austerity, at a time when we need to boost investment. The EPP's dogmatic obsession with debt-reduction will make governments choose between investments and social spending with enormous societal and political consequences.

In order to ensure that a green and just transition is realised, it is essential that the mistakes of the past are not repeated: Inflexible, one-size-fits-all budget rules that impede investment and cut social spending, erode the political legitimacy of EU economic policy coordination, and will not even succeed in lowering debts, failing on its own terms. The Greens/EFA Group is fighting for fiscal rule reform that prioritises investment in a green and just transition, leaves no one behind, accounts for the need for a joint budget at EU level to fund common EU policy priorities, and democratises economic governance.
Vote: Monday, 11 December, ECON Committee

Greens/EFA MEPs: Philippe Lamberts

ROLE OF TAX POLICY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Next week, MEPs will debate and vote on a report from Greens/EFA MEP Kira Marie Peter-Hansen on the role of tax policy in times of crisis. From Covid to the war in Ukraine and climate change, inequalities are exacerbated in times of crisis. The report calls for a full scale assessment of Member States' tax policies and recognises that recent national policies such as VAT reductions have mostly benefited large corporations. The report also calls on the Commission to assess broadening the scope of windfall taxes to cover other areas, while recognising that inflation is largely profit-driven.

The Greens/EFA Group is leading the fight for a more just society where multinationals and the very rich finally contribute their fair share. Our Group believes that tax policy can be used to rebalance the economy and make it fairer if we shift taxation from income to capital and extreme wealth.

Greens/EFA MEP: Kira Marie Peter-Hansen MEP, European Parliament Rapporteur
Debate: Monday, 11 December
Vote: Tuesday, 12 December
More: New study shows small wealth tax could increase tax revenues across the EU by nearly ¼ billion euros
Tax the rich: From slogan to reality

COP28 - WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE: GREENS/EFA PUSH THROUGH PLENARY DEBATE

On the initiative of the Greens/EFA, Members of the European Parliament will debate the outcome of the 28th World Climate Conference in Dubai. The world is watching with bated breath to see whether negotiators can agree on a phase-out of oil, coal and gas. While there has been unexpected progress on the loss and damage fund, the hurdles for an agreement on ending the dependence on fossil fuels and keeping the door open to reach the 1.5 degree target are incomparably higher, in particular under the Presidency of a state-owned oil company CEO. The Greens/EFA urge for excluding representatives of fossil fuel industries from the climate conference along the lines of the World Health Organisation's exclusion of the tobacco industry. We also call for a global phase-out of all fossil fuels, for the end of subsidies for fossil fuels and a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, tripling the share of renewable energies, doubling energy efficiency, and for the release of human rights activist Ahmed Mansoor and all political prisoners in the United Arab Emirates.

Greens/EFA members Bas Eickhout and Jutta Paulus are on the spot as members of the Parliament's delegation, as well as Greens/EFA members Hannah Neuman and Michael Bloss.

Debate: Thursday, 14 December
MEPs: Bas Eickhout, Jutta Paulus, Michael Bloss Hannah Neumann
More: Letter of the Greens/EFA to the President of the United Arab Emirates

Greens/EFA demands

ADDING HATE CRIME AND HATE SPEECH TO THE LIST OF EU CRIMES

Next week, Members of the European Parliament are expected to vote in favour of adding hate crimes and hate speech to the list of EU crimes. The EU list of crimes in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union consists of offences that are considered particularly serious and have a cross-border element. The Parliament calls on the Council to add serious forms of hate speech and hate crimes to the list. The inclusion would enable the development of a common European approach to combat hate speech and hate crime, ensuring adequate legal protection for victims of various forms of racism, antisemitism, islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia and other forms of intolerance. The report highlights the urgent need for joint action against crimes of hatred and discrimination. There has been a constant increase of such crimes in recent years, spiking dramatically in the aftermath of the Hamas terrorist attack on 7 October and the escalation of the war between Israel and Hamas. Member States can no longer oppose the decision to criminalise hate crime and hate speech. The decision is needed to enable the EU co-legislators to establish minimum standards concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions for hate speech and hate crimes, and to protect human dignity, prevent harm, ensure equality and combat hatred and intolerance, irrespective of the motivation.

Debate: Wednesday, 13 December
Vote: Thursday, 14 December
Greens/EFA MEP: Alice Bah Kuhnke

RAINBOW FAMILIES

Members of the European Parliament will vote on the Report on the Regulation for cross-border recognition of parenthood. Rainbow families continue to face discrimination, in particular when exercising their free movement rights in the EU. There are still eleven Member States in which a child cannot have two women or two men as their legal parents. All Member States are bound to act in the best interest of a child, including by safeguarding the fundamental right of every child to family and the prohibition to discriminate against a child on the basis of their parents' marital status or sexual orientation, or the way the child was conceived. The regulation aims to ensure the right to family and equal treatment of all children in cross-border matters. It is key for the Greens/EFA to stop any discrimination of a child, including on the basis of their parents' marital status or sexual orientation.

The regulation must be adopted by Member States with unanimity.

Debate: Wednesday, 13 December
Vote: Thursday, 14 December
Greens/EFA MEP: Sergey Lagodinsky, Saskia Bricmont, Monica Vana, Terry Reintke, Kim van Sparrentak.

ECOCIDE IN UKRAINE

Members of the European Parliament will debate the environmental consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the need for accountability. Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine has caused devastating harm to the country's natural environment, the consequences of which will have long-lasting effects on Ukraine's economic and social fabric. Reconstruction efforts in Ukraine in the wake of the war will have to address a number of key challenges, both to restore damage done to the natural environment, and in rebuilding resilient and sustainable cities. This will prove particularly important for

communities, provide a unique opportunity to reduce the country's carbon footprint and to put in place the structural and legal changes necessary to realise the goals of the European Green Deal. At the same time it is of equal importance that the Russian state is held accountable. We demand adequate economic compensation and full accountability from the Russian state for the environmental damage caused. This is necessary to change the way environmental damage in conflicts is viewed and dealt with in the future. The environment must no longer remain a silent victim of war.
Debate: Tuesday, 12 December
MEP: Heidi Hautala

MORE

Israel/Gaza debate
Members of the European Parliament will debate the Need to release all hostages, to achieve a humanitarian ceasefire and the prospect of the two-state solution.
Debate: Tuesday, 12 December
Greens/EFA MEP: Jordi Solé

Sakharov Prize
On Tuesday, 12 December, the European Parliament will award the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Jina Mahsa Amini and the women of Iran. The Sakharov Prize is awarded to individuals and organisations defending human rights and freedoms. The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the awarding of the prize to Jina Mahsa Amini and the women of Iran.
Debate: Tuesday, 12 December

Critical Raw Materials
The European Parliament will have its final vote on the Critical Raw Materials Act. In the trilogue negotiations, the Greens/EFA successfully pushed for a focus on the moderation of demand, as well as the circularity aspect (notably introducing a recycling benchmark to recycle significantly increasing amounts of each strategic raw material in waste), the due consideration of indigenous peoples and protection of their rights, the proper consideration of civil society, and the overall improvement of recognised schemes.
Debate: Tuesday, 12 December
Vote: Tuesday, 12 December
Greens/EFA MEP: Henrike Hahn

Addictive design of online services and consumer protection in the EU single market
The European Parliament will vote on a proposal calling for rules against addictive design of apps and smartphones. This would include, among other things, a ban on the most addictive design features, such as endless scrolling and automatic movie playback, action against social media's addictive recommendation algorithms and clarity on what goes on behind the scenes, with access to the dashboards of big tech companies.
Vote: Tuesday, 12 December
Greens/EFA MEP: Kim Van Sparrentak

Mental Health
The European Parliament report on Mental Health reflects Greens/EFA priorities, such as equal access to high-quality and affordable mental health care and treatment for all individuals, especially those who belong to marginalised and vulnerable communities. The report also emphasises the importance of improving prevention and reducing environmental and societal risk factors, and the need to improve young people's mental health.
Vote: Wednesday, 13 December

Greens/EFA MEP: Nicolae Ștefănuță

Implementation of the 2018 Geoblocking Regulation in the Digital Single Market
The Geoblocking Regulation, which started applying in December 2018, prohibits unjustified geographical restrictions in the sale of goods and services within the EU. Thanks to the Geoblocking Regulation, consumers are able to buy things online from another EU country at the same price and conditions as local citizens. Audiovisual services, healthcare, financial and transport services are excluded from the scope. If the current text is adopted, for the first time in the EP, a report will ask the Commission to end geoblocking for audiovisual services.
Vote: Tuesday, 12 December
Greens/EFA MEP: Kim Van Sparrentak

LINKS

The Group Presidents Terry Reintke & Philippe Lamberts will hold the plenary session press briefing on Tuesday, 12 of December at 9.00 AM.

Location: Daphne Caruana Galizia Press Room, Weiss N-1/201 or online via European Parliament website . Journalists can ask questions remotely via Interactio.

The full plenary agenda for the week can be found on the Parliament website.

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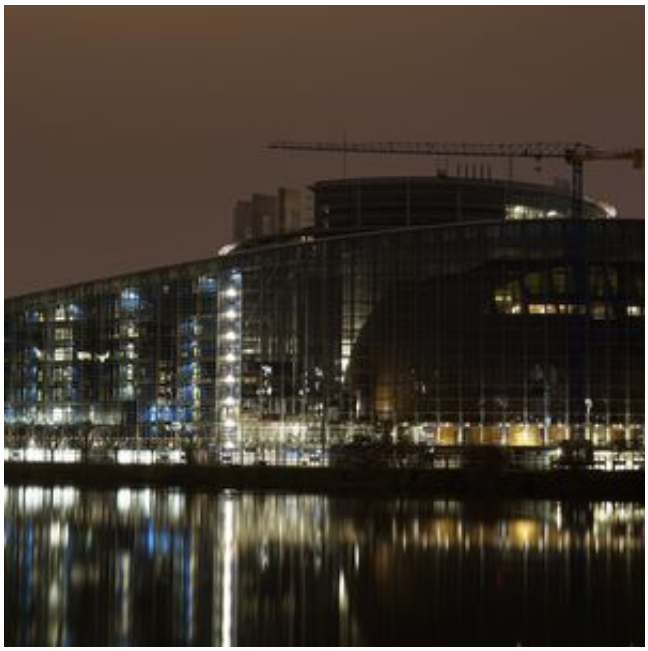
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