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Greens/EFA call for faster action on climate protection

State of the European Union

Today (Wednesday 15 September), the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, delivered the annual State of the European Union address to the European Parliament.

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

"The European Union must seize the opportunity to become a global leader on climate action. The Green Deal has ambitions for the green transformation of climate policy, agricultural policy, transport policy and in financial and economic policy. But, the EU must live up to these promises and push for a complete transformation of our economy.

"We welcome the announcement by President Von der Leyen of a new proposal for a forced labour import ban, which we have long called for. This will be a useful tool for the EU to put pressure on China and others to end the use of forced labour. However, the EU as a truly geopolitical player must lead by example. We will only be able to defend and promote the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law abroad if we respect them within our borders. We must work as one Union if we want to exert influence outside our borders. The Afghanistan disaster has once again shown the limits of a global Europe.

“We must not accept that the people of Afghanistan are now defenceless in the face of the Taliban’s extremist ideology. The EU must support the admission of refugees, humanitarian visas, the rapid distribution of people across the EU and a long-term ban on deportations to Afghanistan. A lack of a strategic vision must not end in the loss of human lives."

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

"The EU faces an historic responsibility for action on climate change. In the upcoming UN climate conference in Glasgow, we can only demand sufficient climate pledges from the rest of the world if we live up to our own commitments. Floods, heat waves and famine show the need for bold action on climate change. We can still prevent some climate tipping points from being crossed. We must stop shifting the responsibility onto the shoulders of future generations; we need climate action now.

“We call on Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Commissioner Frans Timmermans to step up the pace on climate protection and make the EU the global climate champion. The planet cannot wait for crucial measures like the phase out of coal to be implemented only after 2030. President Ursula von der

Leyen must launch a socially just climate transition for the credibility of the Green Deal. In the Common Agricultural Policy, the EU has failed to live up to its climate obligations. The Green Deal's promise of an agricultural transformation will not be fulfilled if EU member states are not committed to climate protection, animal welfare and the protection of biodiversity.

“The question is not what climate protection costs. The question is what it will cost us to miss the opportunity for climate protection to be the driver of our economy and competitiveness."

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