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Debriefing of the April Plenary Session

17-20 April 2023

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FitFor55: CBAM, ETS and Social Climate Fund

This week, a majority of MEPs approved the outcome of trilogue negotiations for the following Fit for 55 files: the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), and Social Climate Fund (SCF). These votes represent the final step in the process of finalizing these three interlinked pillars of the Green Deal.

CBAM

CBAM ends the era of free CO₂ allowances under the European Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). CBAM will mean that companies have to pay CO₂ offsets for production outside the EU and are no longer able to avoid buying CO₂ allowances by moving to third countries. **Manuela Ripa** MEP, Greens/EFA

shadow rapporteur in the lead Environment Committee, comments:

"We are introducing a new global climate protection tool and closing the gap between production within and outside of the EU. CBAM will be the catalyst for clean production and boost the transition to renewable energies. It will bring the EU a step closer to greener global trade."

As the CBAM scope is expanded, the Greens/EFA Group will push for the EU to increase its financial support to poorer countries, which do not bear historic responsibility for climate change and should not be unfairly hit by the EU external carbon price.

ETS

The reform of the EU carbon market (ETS II) will incentivise the energy and industrial sectors to fully decarbonize. Although the Greens/EFA Group pushed for a more ambitious phase out of free CO2 certificates, the annual number of CO2 certificates to be distributed will be reduced gradually to zero by 2040. In return, industries that modernise and transform will get more support through the increased Innovation Fund and Modernisation Fund. **Michael Bloss**, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the ETS in the lead Environment Committee, comments:

"This is a green win and a leap forward for climate policies. No more CO2 permits from 2040 - with the Emissions Trading System, the EU seals the deal on coal exit. We, the Greens/EFA group, were central in securing the polluter-pays principle for the EU. Member States will receive about 700 billion euros to invest in the transition. But this market is socially imbalanced. We cannot take money from people and offer them little in return. We need a European climate dividend to ensure the Green Deal is fair for all."

Social Climate Fund

The Greens/EFA welcome the strong signal given to the energy and industrial sectors to fully decarbonise, but warn about the urgent need for Member States to step up measures at national level to accompany EU citizens in this transition. It is now up to the Member States to ensure that the Social Climate Fund will be socially just. **Sara Matthieu**, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur for the Social Climate Fund, comments:

"The EU has finally created a much-needed fund to directly support people in energy and mobility poverty. While this is an important achievement, it does not suffice as a social pillar for the Green Deal. Nearly 21.9% of the total EU population is at risk of poverty, and they cannot be left to shoulder this burden alone. At EU-level, the Social Climate Fund must act as a stepping stone towards a much more ambitious and social Green Deal."

- [Greens/EFA Press Release](#)
 - [Greens/EFA Press Release](#)
 - [Blogpost on FitFor55 Package](#)
 - [Social Media – Twitter: Greens/EFA](#)
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 - [Social Media – Twitter: Michael Bloss](#)
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Deforestation Regulation

On Wednesday, MEPs debated the urgent need to ban PFAs, a class of thousands of persistent synthetic chemicals, as well as the need to revise EU chemical legislation (REACH). Studies highlight that Europe is widely contaminated by these chemicals which negatively affect people's health and the environment.

A majority of the MEPS approved this ban, which means that big polluters, like factories and power stations, will be forced to pay for their CO2 emissions. This law will lead to a coal phase-out before 2030 and a gradual reduction in emissions towards climate neutrality in 2050. The Greens/EFA Group is demanding direct support for people to pay for their transportation and energy. While polluting is becoming expensive for companies, people must be protected from rising prices.

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Forever pollutants

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Crypto

On Thursday, MEPs voted through the outcome of two key files regulating the crypto sphere for the first time. The Transfer of Funds Regulation and Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation are the first major regulations to address the lack of transparency in the sector and provide greater security to investors, while mitigating risks of money laundering and criminality.

Ernest Urtasun MEP, Greens/EFA Co-Rapporteur on the Transfer of Funds Regulation and Shadow

Rapporteur on MiCA Regulation, commented:

"MiCA and the Transfer of Funds Regulation mark the end of the unregulated wild west of crypto and the start of a new era of a safer, regulated crypto space. The Greens/ EFA have pushed for more ambitious and robust legislation that will support the fight against money laundering and close the gaping hole in consumer protection and financial oversight in crypto markets."

- [Greens/EFA Press Release](#)
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EU-China relations

On Tuesday, MEPs debated relations between the EU and China in light of the recent joint visit of French President Macron and Commission President von der Leyen. This diplomatic embarrassment has shown disunity and contradictions in the EU and the line expressed by Macron does not at all reflect the position on China of most EU Member States, nor of the European Parliament.

The EU urgently needs a credible strategy that deals with the many challenges posed by China, such as the risk of conflict in the Taiwan Strait and China's plan to develop an international order that no longer centers around human rights and individual freedoms. President von der Leyen's landmark speech from the 30th March is a very good basis on which to build such a strategy, which should be further developed in order to safeguard EU economic security.

Philippe Lamberts, Greens/EFA Co-President, comments:

"Europe must reduce its hyper-dependence on China in order to acquire greater economic autonomy. The point is not to break ties with China - it would remain a trade partner - but rather to diversify our partnerships."

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LGBTQ+ rights in Uganda

On Thursday, MEPS debated the new Anti-LGBTQ+ law in Uganda and voted for a Universal Decriminalization of Homosexuality resolution.

Kim van Sparrentak MEP, comments:

"The new Ugandan anti-LGBTI law shows why we need a European strategy for the universal decriminalisation of homosexuality and transgender identity. Being who you are and loving who you love should never be a crime. Europe should lead in making this a reality!"

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