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News | 17.02.2017

Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 13-16 February 2017

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EU ETS revision – MEPs must align scheme with Paris ambition

Monday 13 February - debate / Wednesday 15 Feb - vote

The European Parliament voted Wednesday on the revision of the EU's Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) for the period 2021-2030. This was the European Parliament's first major test on implementing the Paris Agreement and MEPs have failed miserably. Central to the deal reached in the Environment committee was the removal of cement and clinker from the list of industries receiving free allocations. Ending free allocations for this heavily polluting sector could save as much as 20 billion euros, which could be used instead to finance climate action, and would have a positive downward effect on emissions. However, following intensive lobbying, this progress was lost, as was the increase to the rate of annual reductions of the number of allowances. The ETS is the European Union's landmark policy in the fight against climate change but it remains a faulty instrument. For all the talk of a historic agreement to fight climate change, it seems that too many in the European Parliament are still not prepared to match their rhetoric with real action. As a result, the Greens/EFA group voted against the proposal.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Podcast - Bas Eickhout on ETS](#)
- [Blog post](#)

Further information

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Whistleblowers: European Parliament demands whistleblower protection (again!)

Monday 13 February - debate

The Greens/EFA group is keeping up the pressure on the European Commission: After we drafted a [model law](#) to protect whistleblowers all across Europe last year, the Commission is finally moving forward, and the Parliament in the meantime has been focussing on the need to protect whistleblowers when EU funds are being misspent. On Tuesday, MEPs adopted a report on whistleblower protection from the Budgetary Control Committee. In it, the European Parliament makes a strong call for whistleblower protection, including a specific demand to set up an independent body to receive complaints about fraud in the EU budget. The report also calls on the Commission to present a proposal to protect whistleblowers in the Member States before the end of the year.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Blog post](#)
- [Social media – Twitter](#)
- [Social media - Facebook](#)
- [Plenary speech – Benedek Jávor](#)
- [Plenary speech – Molly Scott Cato](#)

Further information

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Austrian President Van der Bellen addresses plenary

Tuesday 14 February

The Greens/EFA Group was delighted to welcome Tuesday a former Green party leader to the European Parliament when Austrian President, Alexander Van der Bellen, addressed the plenary. After Brexit and the victory of Donald Trump, his success shows that pro-European voices offering a message of unity rather than division can succeed in defeating populist and nationalist forces. Mr. Van der Bellen embodies hope for the whole of Europe. He has shown that enthusiasm for the EU and a commitment to European values can resonate with the majority of voters. There is an important lesson to be learned from his success. Rather than chasing after the right-wing nationalists, we must focus on our own strengths and goals. We will now fight to prove that what Van der Bellen achieved in Austria can be replicated all across the European Union.

- [Press release \(EN/FR\)](#)

- [Social media](#)
-

Future of the EU - Joint debate

Tuesday 14 February - debate / Thursday 16 Feb – votes

The European Parliament adopted Thursday a series of reports on the future of Europe. Unfortunately, the grand coalition in the Parliament managed to force through all its amendments, but only by a narrow majority. Green-supported amendments and deletions were rejected. Each report looks at a different aspect of the future of the EU. The first two, both from the Constitutional Affairs committee, look at the potential of the current treaties and set out proposals to change them. The report from Guy Verhofstadt (Liberals) contains a range of positive proposals in terms of democratic accountability, balance of powers and institutional organisation. We would like to see the relationship between the three main institutions changed, with a stronger role for the Parliament. We also want to see more effective use of the existing treaties, such as reforming the ECI.

- [Text adopted – Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union](#)
- [Text adopted - Improving the functioning of the EU](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information

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Greek economic adjustment programme

Tuesday 14 February - Statement by the President of the Eurogroup

The Eurogroup is due to meet on 20 February where it will discuss the on-going second review of Greece's economic adjustment programme. With Greece due to make a 7.2 billion euro repayment in July, and elections just around the corner in the Netherlands, France and Germany, Greens have called for negotiations to be swiftly concluded. Financial support for Greece must not be made conditional on further austerity measures, such as additional pension cuts, or profound deregulation of the labour market against the European social model.

Further information

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Commission comitology reform

Tuesday 14 February

The Commission has published Tuesday a long-awaited proposal to reform the so-called comitology

process used to authorize new GMOs and pesticides at EU level. Decisions can only be taken in the standing committees when a qualified majority is reached, but routine abstentions from big states are making this process unworkable. The Greens/EFA want a new system that makes these decisions, which carry significant health implications as seen in the recent case of glyphosate, more democratic and transparent. For this to be achieved, decisions should fall to the governments of the EU member states and the European Parliament.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Blog post](#)
- [Social media](#)

Further information

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Further information

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CETA Deal puts interests of big business first

Wednesday 15 February - plenary debate and vote

The European Parliament has voted Wednesday in favour of CETA. For the Greens, this is a dark day. This vote is a defeat for the EU and for the prospect of regulating globalisation by putting social and human rights as well as the environment ahead of the interests of big business. A majority of MEPs, including the centre-right EPP, Liberals and many from the centre-left S&D, voted in favour of the agreement, playing into the hands of the extreme right and nationalist forces. They have shown themselves to be deaf to the well-grounded concerns of civil society, employees, consumers, local authorities, SMEs, lawyers and citizens. Private “courts” for investors will undermine our democracies. Pro-CETA members of the European Parliament have failed to learn the lessons from the Brexit vote and Trump victory and have increased the power of multinationals at the expense of citizens. However, the fight is not over. CETA must now be ratified by all Member States. We Greens will continue to fight against CETA across Europe as all national and regional parliaments begin the ratification process.

On Thursday, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addressed the plenary. We reiterated that it was of the utmost importance that Europe and Canada work together on human rights, justice and climate protection. Canada, together with the EU, can play a leading role in global climate protection. But for this to happen, Trudeau has to end his support for the Keystone pipeline, the environmentally harmful project to carry tar sand oil from Canada to the USA.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/ES/FR/IT\)](#)
- [Social media](#)
- [Flickr album – Greens protest against CETA](#)
- [12 reasons the Greens/EFA Group is opposed to CETA](#)
- [Greens/EFA motion for a resolution on CETA](#)

Further information

Terrorism: poor definitions undermine intention of directive

Wednesday 15 February - plenary debate / Thursday 16 Feb - vote

The European Parliament adopted Thursday the new EU directive intended to support the fight against terrorism. Despite welcoming elements of the directive, the Greens/EFA Group voted against, due to a range of concerns regarding the definition of terrorist offences and the risks posed to fundamental freedoms. What the directive defines as terrorism could be used by governments to criminalise legitimate political actions or protests. We also remain deeply sceptical about the move to criminalise travel for the purposes of terrorism, including within the European Union. We remain hopeful as the Directive now includes, thanks to Greens/EFA persistence, a fundamental rights reporting obligation: in a few years, the Commission will have to assess the added value of this Directive in the fight against terrorism and its impact on fundamental rights, especially non-discrimination.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information

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Robotics: need for a legal framework

Wednesday 15 February - plenary debate, Thursday 16 Feb - vote

The report tackles a wide variety of issues covered by robotics, including its impact on civil liability rules, on health, employment, transport and privacy. The report is broad enough not to hinder innovation or the development of the European artificial intelligence economy, while re-asserting some important principles. We are keen that the precautionary principle be applied, and that attention is paid to privacy and data protection, and the impact on jobs and the economy. However, we regret that the liberal group's deletion of certain nuances, which were very useful in relation to the impact of robotisation on the employment sector. The Commission must act and create a legal framework.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Greens/EFA digital working group paper](#)

Further information

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Aviation strategy not credible

Thursday 16 February - debate and vote

MEPs gave their support Thursday to the Commission's aviation strategy. The Greens/EFA Group voted against, citing the continued lack of climate realism and the failure to address unfair intermodal competition. The Commission's priorities are hard to reconcile with the EU's Paris Agreement commitments. We need to have a credible aviation strategy that allows us to curb emissions and prioritise more sustainable transport modes, such as rail transport. The aviation sector already benefits from unfair competition against other, more sustainable modes of transport.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information

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Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

[Conclusion of the EU-Canada CETA](#)

[Commission Delegated Regulation](#)

[Guatemala](#)

[Executions in Kuwait and Bahrain](#)

[Nicaragua](#)

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Contact person



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