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News | 06.10.2017

## Greens/EFA Round up

### Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 2-6 October 2017

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#### Cancellation of air flights by Ryanair and passenger rights

*Council and Commission statement, Tuesday*

On a Greens/EFA initiative, the European Parliament heard Council and Commission statements in response to Ryanair's recent cancellation of thousands of flights. The scandal raises serious questions about Ryanair's practices and their impact on both their employees and customers.

Greens/EFA MEPs **Jakop Dalunde** and **Michael Cramer** as well as Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, **Karima Delli**, *called on the EU Commission to remind Ryanair of its responsibility to play by the rules of European air passenger rights law and declared that sanctions should also be considered. For the Greens/EFA, "this whole episode highlights the drawbacks of the low-cost airlines. It is high time the EU stopped encouraging the low-cost airline model, which damages the planet, results in social dumping and jeopardises fair competition in transport. There should be put an end to subsidies for these practices."*

- [Press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by Karima Delli](#)

Further information

Paul Beeckmans - Advisor on Transport and Tourism

[paul.beeckmans@ep.europa.eu](mailto:paul.beeckmans@ep.europa.eu)

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## **Brexit - State of play of negotiations with the United Kingdom**

*Commission statement and debate on Tuesday, vote on Wednesday*

The Greens/EFA co-presidents, alongside their counterparts from ALDE, EPP, S&D and GUE/NGL, co-signed [a draft motion for a resolution](#) on the state of play of negotiations with the United Kingdom. Sufficient progress has not yet been made on citizens' rights, Ireland and Northern Ireland, and the settlement of the UK's financial obligations. Unless there is major breakthrough in all three areas, the Council should postpone its assessment on whether sufficient progress has been made.

Following the debate, Greens/EFA co-president **Philippe Lamberts** commented: *"While we accept the result of the referendum, this decision will produce no winners : neither the UK nor the EU-27. If we want to limit the inevitable damage that will be caused by this lose-lose situation, we should waste no more time and negotiate in good faith first the withdrawal agreement, then the outline of our future relationship and the transition that will bridge to it. No deal by March 2019 would be the worst deal – for everyone and first, for our respective citizens."*

- [Press release](#)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Plenary speech by Philippe Lamberts](#)

Further information

Guillaume Sellier, Advisor on Constitutional Affairs

[guillaume.sellier@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:guillaume.sellier@europarl.europa.eu)

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## **Dumping of exports from third countries: social and environmental standards to be finally taken into account**

*Trilogue*

Following lengthy trilogues on a new European policy on the dumping of exports from third countries such as China, a new approach has been agreed that for the first time includes social and environmental standards as a basis to determine the existence of significant distortions.

For the Greens/EFA trade spokesperson, **Yannick Jadot**, the European Union is taking a step in the right direction by starting to combat social and environmental dumping from third countries. Commenting about the outcome of the discussions, he said : *"It is a particular success for the Greens that the core standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the standards of multilateral environmental agreements will now become the criteria for measuring market distortions. If these standards are not respected then exporters are able to create unfair advantages, which must be limited. This will be made possible by the new procedure, which the Commission and the Council were prepared to put their weight behind. The new methodology is not*

*protectionist and does not involve any discrimination against a third country. At the same time, it represents a break with the usual laissez-faire attitude, which neglects the risks of dumping on European industrial enterprises and industrial work places. Globalisation does not grant countries the freedom to undermine social and ecological standards for one-sided economic advantage."*

- [Press release](#)

Further information

Chiara Miglioli, Advisor on International Trade

[chiara.miglioli@ep.europa.eu](mailto:chiara.miglioli@ep.europa.eu)

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## **Constitution, rule of law and fundamental rights in Spain in the light of the events in Catalonia**

*Commission statement, Wednesday*

The Greens/EFA Group called for a debate on the situation in Catalonia after the violence of the Spanish police in Catalonia last Sunday. Greens/EFA Co-President **Ska Keller** strongly condemned the use of police force and urged the EU Commission to mediate in the conflict. *For her, "the EU Commission could be an honest broker accepted by the Spanish and the Catalan governments to bridge their differences and to find a common solution. It is the Commission's duty as the guardian of the treaties to get involved and offer help in solving the conflict. While no two problems are the same, we must be careful to avoid any impression of double standards in the European Union".* **Philippe Lamberts**, Greens/EFA Co-President, added: *"What is happening in Catalonia now is not only a Spanish issue: it goes to the core of the European Union. Our motto is unity in diversity, a diversity we choose to see as an asset rather than as a weakness. If it is an internal matter, it is also one that concerns the European Union."*

- [Press release](#) (4 October)
  - [Plenary speech by Ska Keller](#) (4 October)
  - [Plenary speech by Ska Keller](#) (2 October)
  - [Press release](#) (1 October)
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## **2017 UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn (COP23)**

*Debate Tuesday, vote on Wednesday*

This resolution sets out the European Parliament's position for the next Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC, COP23, taking place 6-17 November 2017 in Bonn under the Presidency of Fiji. The draft resolution adopted by the Environment Committee recognises that global carbon emissions need to be phased out by 2050 and that this means that most sectors in the EU need to achieve zero emissions considerably earlier.

In its resolution which was adopted by a huge majority, the European Parliament recognises current INDCs fail to meet Paris Agreement commitments and calls for EU 2030 climate target to be reviewed in the context of 2018 UNFCCC facilitative dialogue before Paris Agreement starts. It also calls for UNFCCC process to be protected from vested interests and continues to advocate EU contributing its fair share of climate finance, including through the use of revenues from market based instruments, e.g. on aviation and shipping for this purpose.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Plenary speech by Marco Affronte](#)
- [Plenary speech by Max Andersson](#)

Further information

Terhi Lehtonen – Advisor on environmental issues

[terhi.lehtonen@ep.europa.eu](mailto:terhi.lehtonen@ep.europa.eu)

Delphine Chalençon - Climate Change Campaigner

[delphine.chalencon@ep.europa.eu](mailto:delphine.chalencon@ep.europa.eu)

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## **Endocrine Disrupters: Parliament shows European Commission the red card**

*Plenary vote on Wednesday*

The European Parliament voted in favour of an objection to the EU Commission's criteria seeking to introduce a derogation from an existing ban of certain hormone disrupting chemicals (endocrine disrupters). The objection passed with a majority of 389 votes, 13 votes above the threshold of 376 for an absolute majority. The vote came after the Parliament's Environment Committee backed an objection co-signed by Greens/EFA MEP **Bas Eickhout**. In its proposal, the EU Commission was going well beyond its mandate because it not only sets out criteria, but also attempts to halt a ban on endocrine disrupters in the environmental sector. *The European Parliament has managed to stop the thoroughly undemocratic attempt by the EU Commission to change the rules on certain endocrine disruptors through the back door.* The Commission now needs to revise its proposal and it can no longer propose the unlawful derogation to an existing ban in the basic act via comitology. *“The vote we have won today is a victory for democracy, the environment and for citizens”,* said **Bas Eickhout**.

- [Plenary speech by Bas Eickhout](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Roll-call vote](#)

Further information

Axel Singhofen, Advisor on Health and Environment Policy

[axel.singhofen@ep.europa.eu](mailto:axel.singhofen@ep.europa.eu)

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## **European Public Prosecutor's Office - Fight against (VAT) fraud**

*Debate Wednesday, Vote Thursday*

The European Parliament voted with a large majority in favour of establishing a European Public Prosecutor's Office. The new EU public prosecutor will be an independent body with the power to investigate and prosecute fraud in the EU, particularly VAT fraud. The EU Commission estimates that the EU loses up to 50 billion euros each year to VAT fraud. Those billions could be invested in public services, environmental protection, energy transition and vital infrastructure. The European Public Prosecutor's Office is an example of where European collaboration is both necessary and can reap major rewards for the public.

The EPPO has the potential to become a major European project and the doors are open to all EU countries to engage with it. The EU Commission must focus on ensuring EU-wide investigations with

strong safeguards for suspects, and submit a proposal for high standards for pre-trial custody across the EU. “*Macron and Juncker are both looking ahead and have shown their support for broadening the remit of the EPPO to include the fight against terrorism and organised crime. The governments of the Member States should also throw their weight behind such proposals*”, said Greens/EFA spokesperson on civil liberties, justice and home affairs, **Jan Philipp Albrecht**, after the vote.

- [Plenary speech by Jan Philipp Albrecht](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)

Further information

Nicholas Hernanz, Advisor on on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs  
[nicholas.hernanz@ep.europa.eu](mailto:nicholas.hernanz@ep.europa.eu)

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## **Comitology objection to two genetically modified soyabeans**

*Vote Wednesday*

The European Parliament voted with a large majority to adopt objections on placing on the market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified soybeans DAS-44406-6 and FG72 x A5547-127. Greens/EFA were at the forefront of the objections, with the resolutions adopted in September in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

Since the beginning of 2014, the Parliament has adopted 16 objections to GMO authorisations, of which 11 for food and feed imports.

In February 2017, the Commission presented a new proposal aiming at amending the rules under which implementing acts can be adopted. In its explanatory memorandum, it lays out that the current procedure is unsatisfactory, and that, especially in the fields of GMOs (and, partly, for pesticides), authorisation decisions are adopted by the Commission without the support of a qualified majority of Member States. This is indeed sadly the case, and the fact that the Commission continues to authorise GMOs without the support of a qualified majority of Member States, as well as the Parliament systematically voting against, highlights the complete lack of democratic legitimacy of this process.

- [See our recent press conference on new GMOs](#)

Further information

Joanna Sprackett, Advisor on Food Safety and Quality  
[joanna.sprackett@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:joanna.sprackett@europarl.europa.eu)

Juliette Leroux - GMO Campaigner  
[juliette.leroux@ep.europa.eu](mailto:juliette.leroux@ep.europa.eu)

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## **Prisons systems and conditions**

*Debate and vote Thursday*

MEPs adopted the report on prisons systems and conditions with a huge majority. This report addresses the situation in European prisons, which remains problematic, especially in certain Member States, such as Hungary, Belgium, Greece, Spain, France, Portugal and Italy.

The reports calls on Member States need to improve conditions of detention, limit overcrowding, facilitate the right of prisoners to vote and protect the rights of minors, elderly and disabled prisoners. Our Group voted in favour of this initiative report which includes many key points of our Green vision of a more progressive prison system in Europe.

- [Plenary speech by Eva Joly](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information

Nicholas Hernanz, Advisor on on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs  
[nicholas.hernanz@ep.europa.eu](mailto:nicholas.hernanz@ep.europa.eu)

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## **Greens/EFA nominee for the Sakharov Prize visits European Parliament**

Aura Lolita Chavez Ixcaquic, known as Lolita, is a Maya K'iche human rights defender from Guatemala. Lolita is a leader of the Council of K'iche' Peoples in Defence of Life, Mother Nature, Earth and Territory (CPK), an organization that brings together 87 indigenous communities who work to protect their lands and its resources, against the exploitation by large-scale mining and hydroelectric projects, including by European companies. These fights have pitted indigenous communities and their defenders, like Lolita, up against powerful interests. Having received death threats, Lolita had to flee her country this summer. According to Global Witness in 2016 on average four environmental human rights defenders were murdered each week. Last year, almost 40% of murdered environmental human rights defenders belonged to indigenous peoples.

The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought was set up in 1988 and is awarded each year by the European Parliament. It is named after Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov. The prize is awarded for a particular achievement in one of the following fields: defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the right to free expression; safeguarding the rights of minorities; respect for international law; development of democracy and implementation of the rule of law

Members of the Foreign Affairs and Development Committees will vote on 10 October. The top 3 candidates will be shortlisted and the Conference of Presidents of the political groups will decide on one laureate on 26 October. The award ceremony takes place during the December plenary session.

- [Web article on Lolita Chávez](#)
- [Facebook Live conversation with NGO Front Line Defenders](#)

Further information

Raphael Fisera - Advisor on Human Rights  
[raphael.fisera@ep.europa.eu](mailto:raphael.fisera@ep.europa.eu)

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## **Greens/EFA motions for resolutions for urgencies**

- [Situation of people with albinism in Malawi and other African countries](#)
  - [Cases of Crimean Tatar leaders Akhtem Chiygoz and Ilmi Umerov and journalist Mykola Semena](#)
  - [Situation in the Maldives](#)
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*Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 27 October 2017*

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### **Contact person**



Jean Kuttén

Head of Web & Publications Unit

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