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News | 11.12.2020

Plenary Flash 14-18 December 2020

Greens/EFA priorities for the session

DIGITAL SERVICES ACT

The European Commission will present its Digital Services Act package, as part of the European Digital Strategy. The Commission aims to frame the digital services' responsibilities and address the risks faced by users in order to protect their rights and guarantee their online safety.

For the Greens/EFA group, this is the great opportunity to set global standards regarding the use of internet, that should include the following priorities: putting citizen's rights and freedoms at the heart of the proposal, ensuring the effectiveness of Notice and Action procedures and co-complaints and redress mechanisms to remove toxic and discriminatory content; stopping automated censorship and upload filters, leading to an over blocking of legal speech, while ensuring that discrimination bias in content moderation, especially against minorities and disadvantaged groups, is avoided; addressing in an effective way the problematic and illegal content in social networks; ending surveillance capitalism, identity theft and any other kind of abuse of personal data; enabling a diverse ecosystem based on user choice, real interoperability and legal certainty. The group launched a campaign to gather citizens suggestions, comments and shared experiences regarding abusive taken down of online content.

Date of publication by the Commission: 15 Tuesday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Alexandra Geese, Patrick Breyer, Marcel Kolaja

More: [Online campaign 'My content my rights'](#), blog ['Put rights and freedoms at the centre of the upcoming Digital Services Act'](#) by MEPs Alexandra Geese, Patrick Breyer and Marcel Kolaja

CONCLUSIONS OF EUROPEAN COUNCIL MEETING

The European Council has finally agreed on the Multiannual Financial Framework, the Covid Recovery fund and the Climate Target. For the first time in history the EU is linking the payment of subsidies to rule of law criteria and is launching a green budget and reconstruction plan. On the climate, Greens/EFA group welcomes the agreement of European Union leaders to raise their climate target to at least 55% net

emissions reduction by 2030, but significantly more effort is needed to reach the Paris climate goals. The European Parliament voted for a 60% reduction of greenhouse gases by 2030.

Vote and debate 16 Wednesday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Ska Keller and Philippe Lamberts

More: [Negotiations on a European Climate Law crucial](#)

WATER LEGISLATION & QUALITY OF WATER FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

On Tuesday, the European Parliament will vote on the agreement reached with the Council on the review of the Drinking Water Directive. It aims to ensure the safety and quality of water for human consumption. From now on microplastics and some other new chemicals will be added to the list of substances Member States have to monitor regularly in drinking water. Also, Member States will have to provide public water dispensers to ensure free access to drinking water to everyone. The Greens/EFA group has been strongly supporting these issues and is welcoming the final decision.

Vote and debate Tuesday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Sven Giegold

More:

- [Background-Briefing from December 2019](#)
- [Press Release 19/12/19 on the Revision of the Drinking Water Directive](#)

A NEW STRATEGY FOR EUROPEAN SMES

This report is a response to the Commission's Strategy on SMEs. The text takes into account the impact of the COVID crisis on SMEs, and stresses their importance in the EU's recovery. The Greens/EFA group considers SMEs to be the backbone of the European economy and should therefore be central to the recovery and to achieving an environmentally sustainable and fair economy.

The Greens/EFA group particularly welcomes the links to the European Green Deal, including calling for a regulatory and financial framework to enable SMEs and SME associations to adopt and offer environmentally sustainable goods and services. The Greens/EFA also welcomes how the Strategy addresses the persistent gap in female entrepreneurship and calls for the collection of gender-disaggregated data to improve policy decisions, as well as measures to increase the percentage of female company founders and managers.

Debate Monday, vote Tuesday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Henrike Hahn

More: [Commission's SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe](#) (March 2020)

EUROPEAN YEAR OF RAIL

On Monday, the European Parliament will debate and vote on the Commission's proposal to make 2021 the "European Year of Rail". Expected to kick off "the rail renaissance", the Greens/EFA group considers

this a big success and a welcome step forward towards a modal shift that will make our transport systems more sustainable.

The Greens/EFA are counting on the Commission and the Member States to speed up the completion of missing cross-border train connections and services, eliminate bottlenecks and promote the reintroduction of night trains throughout Europe. In order to achieve our climate targets, our Group is calling for the phasing out of all short-haul flights (under 500km) and combustion engines by 2030. These changes need to go hand in hand with the development of a sustainable and affordable alternative to planes that prioritises the needs of passengers.

Debate Monday, vote Tuesday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg is rapporteur

More: [How green will transport be in the future? Opinion by Ciarán Cuffe MEP](#)

“MINORITY SAFEPAK” ECI - DIVERSITY IN EUROPE

The “Minority Safepack” is an European Citizens’ Initiative which aims to ensure respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and to promote cultural and linguistic diversity in the EU. The initiative calls for legislative proposals in nine distinct areas, including regional and linguistic community funding, equality for stateless minorities and the creation of a Language Diversity Centre. Over 1.1 million European Citizens have signed the ECI, and the Parliament is now tabling its own resolution on the Initiative. The Greens/EFA particularly supports the Parliament’s call for the Commission to propose legal acts to address their concerns.

This ECI has been one of the first priorities of the Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages, which was set up in January 2020.

Debate on Monday, vote on Thursday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Rasmus Andresen is shadow rapporteur, François Alfonsi is co-chair of Intergroup for Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages.

More: [Minority SafePack Initiative](#)

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR SUPPORT BY THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL FUND

The Commission is presenting this proposal to ensure continuity for the transitional period (2021 - 2022) while the CAP reform is still under negotiation. The negotiating mandate for these transitional provisions was approved during the EP Plenary on 15 May 2020, and the Greens/EFA Group voted against it because it cements a backward-looking agricultural policy. The proposed regulation includes very little changes, as it falls under the rule of “old rules, new money”, and maintains the same structural design to distribute the funds during the transitional period.

However, the Greens/EFA group celebrates some changes included in the proposal during the negotiations, like the additional Technical Assistance for smaller and periphery Member States, which will be helpful in preparing the new CAP, and the fact that the multiannual agro-environmental, organic and animal welfare commitments no longer need to be shortened. Besides that, this Transitional Regulation includes funds from the Next Generation EU and the European Recovery Instrument in order to support the agricultural sector affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each year, the EU spends 35% of its budget (50 billion euros) on the Common Agricultural Policy.

Debate Tuesday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Bronis Ropé

More: [MEP Bronis Ropé on the CAP transitional regulation mandate \(15/05/2020\)](#)

RESOLUTION ON A COUNCIL CONFIGURATION ON GENDER EQUALITY

With this resolution, the European Parliament calls for the creation of a Council configuration on Gender Equality. If we want to combat gender inequality, all the European Institutions must adapt their structures in order to deliver results. While the Parliament has a dedicated Committee (FEMM), the European Council has no specific dedicated forum for it. The Greens/EFA Group fully supports this call for the Council to create an assembly where representatives of the Member States can discuss legislative measures to address challenges in the field of women's rights and gender equality.

According to the resolution, this body must include an intersectional approach, and should therefore take into account the distinct forms of discrimination faced by women belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, racialised women, older women, women with disabilities, Roma women, LGBTI women, refugee and migrant women, and women at risk of social exclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls: there has been an exponential increase in gender-based violence, and women are being adversely affected by partial or precarious employment. The Greens/EFA group considers instruments such as this to be vital to advance a recovery that effectively fights against the discrimination that women are still facing in Europe.

Debate Wednesday, vote Thursday

Greens/EFA MEPs: Alice Kuhnke

MORE

- The full plenary agenda for the week can be found on the Parliament website [here](#).
- The plenary sessions can be followed [live here](#).

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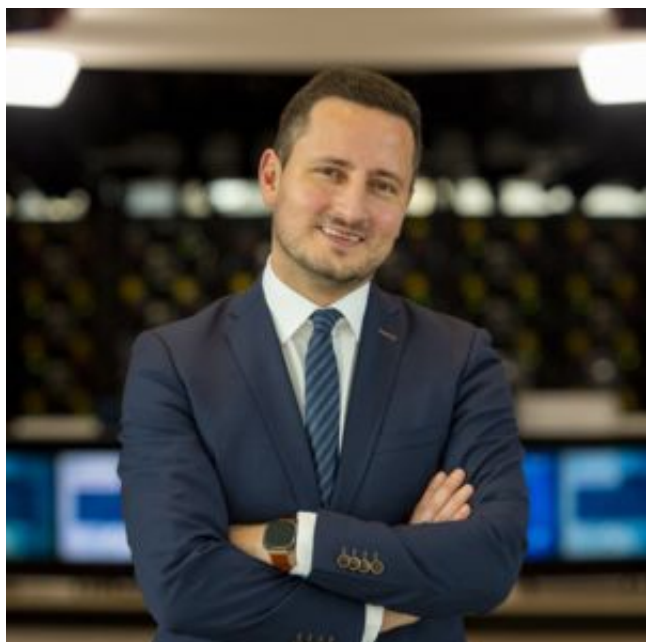
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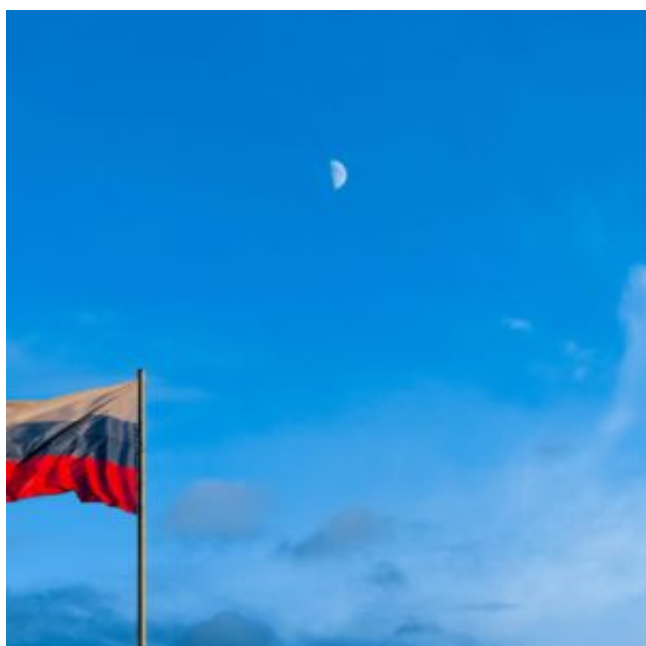
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