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Plenary Flash 17-20 May 2021

Greens/EFA priorities for the part-session

Meeting the Global Covid 19 challenge: effects of waiver of the WTO TRIPS agreement on Covid-19 vaccines, treatment, equipment and manufacturing capacity in developing countries

In light of the announcement made by the US President Joe Biden, the Greens/EFA Group requested a debate with resolution on the effects of waiver of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) on Covid-19 vaccines, treatment and equipment and manufacturing capacity in developing countries. Statements will be made by the Council and the Commission.

The Greens/EFA Group is calling on the European Commission to support this historic initiative. The EU needs to lend full support to technology transfer to third countries to scale up production globally. The fight against the pandemic will only succeed if we work together; the vaccines against Covid-19 must become a public good for the benefit of all.

Greens/EFA MEP: **Sara Matthieu** (shadow)

Debate: Wednesday, 19 May. Vote: in June

More:

- [US to temporarily suspend intellectual property rights for Covid-19 vaccines - Quotes from Ska Keller & Philippe Lamberts](#)

The conflict of interest of the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

The Council and Commission will make statements about the conflict of interest of the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Andrej Babiš, and how they will handle this case in the future. In its audit report published on 23th April, the European Commission has clearly shown that the PM Babiš has breached

conflict of interest rules over his control of trust funds linked to his Agrofert group of companies. All EU subsidies, as well as any funds that were awarded from the Czech national budget to his company Agrofert since February 2017, when a local conflict of interest law came into force, are irregular and should be returned.

The Greens/EFA Group has been the first to call out to the Commission in September 2018 and demanded that this case sees a full investigation and a proper follow-up to these findings, which were just finalized and published by the Commission. Now it is finally time for the Council to react with more than empty gestures. PM Babiš must demonstrate that he is no longer in conflict of interest, either by cutting ties to Agrofert or by ensuring that he can have no economic interest that might arise from his role as head of the Czech government.

Greens/EFA MEPs: **Viola von Cramon & Mikuláš Peksa** (Greens/EFA Coordinators in the Budgetary Control Committee)

Debate: Wednesday, 19 May, Vote: June

More:

- [Conflicts of interest - Commission letter on Andrej Babiš leaked](#)
- [Parliament to debate EU subsidies and potential conflicts of interest](#)
- [Parliament report: no mechanism to address conflict of interest in Czechia](#)

Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy - EU strategy towards Israel-Palestine

In recent days, Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem have been the scene of a new escalation of violence that has left hundreds dead and thousands injured. The Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will make statements on the EU strategy towards Israel-Palestine.

The Greens/EFA are shocked and saddened by this escalation. The Group has called for this urgent debate in the Plenary session. The EU needs to set out how it can help bring lasting peace to the region.

Debate: Tuesday, 18 May (no resolution)

More:

- [Greens/EFA group opposes any Israeli annexation and reaffirms the need for a two-state solution - Position paper](#)

Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition Fund (JTF) is a new instrument with an overall budget of €17.5 billion. This fund is the core element of the European Green Deal, helping the regions most affected by the ecological transition. The vote aims at concluding the European Parliament's first reading following agreements in inter-institutional negotiations.

The Greens/EFA Group has requested the establishment of the JTF for a long time, intending to support

regions moving towards a climate-neutral economy and the phasing out of coal. From the beginning, it was essential for the Greens/EFA to not allow JTF support for fossil fuels. This has paid off; the JTF is now truly a climate fund, and not a single JTF-Euro will be spent on gas infrastructure.

Greens/EFA MEP: **Niklas Nienass** (Greens/EFA shadow in the Regional Development committee)
Debate: Monday, 17 May. Vote: Tuesday, 18 May

More:

- [EU agreement: No place for fossil fuels in the Just Transition Fund](#)

Council and Commission statements - Recent deaths in the Mediterranean and search and rescue at sea

Following a recent increase in tragic deaths in the Mediterranean, the Greens/EFA Group have called for an urgent debate on the situation facing migrants and refugees crossing the sea, with the Council and Commission. The debate comes after revelations that appear to show the EU border Agency, Frontex, coordinating with the Libyan Coast Guard to arrange illegal "pullbacks", stopping refugees and migrants from crossing the Mediterranean into Europe. The Libyan Coast Guard has been accused of multiple human rights violations. The debate also comes ahead of the report from the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group, due in June from Greens/EFA MEP **Tineke Strik**.

Greens/EFA MEPs: **Tineke Strik & Erik Marquardt**
Debate: Tuesday, 18 May (no resolution)

More:

- [New revelations show Frontex working with Libyan Coast Guard](#)

Human rights protection and the EU external migration policy

The EU and its Member States are far from meeting their human rights obligations towards migrants in the conduct of the external dimension of EU migration policy. This report by Greens/EFA Rapporteur **Tineke Strik** provides the first operational framework for ensuring effective protection and safeguards throughout the EU migration policy cycle and across all EU actors and bodies, as well as for enhanced parliamentary scrutiny and democratic oversight.

The Greens/EFA Group through this report are calling for: an independent, transparent and effective monitoring mechanism, and a possibility for civil society to contribute to this monitoring; the assurance that EU external migration policy is not supporting interceptions at sea that return people to an unsafe port, which would be complicit in human rights violations; and the assurance that EU readmission agreements and cooperation on border management are only concluded with third countries that explicitly commit to respecting human rights.

Greens/EFA MEP: **Tineke Strik** (Rapporteur in the Foreign Affairs committee and the Human Rights subcommittee)
Debate: Tuesday, 18 May. Vote: Wednesday, 19 May

More:

- [New Frontex Scrutiny Working Group - quote from Tineke Strik MEP](#)
- [State of emergency at the French-Italian border](#)
- [For a fair and efficient asylum system in Europe - Greens/EFA proposal](#)

A European Strategy for Hydrogen

With this own-initiative report, the European Parliament reacts to the European Hydrogen Strategy of the Commission, released in July 2020, and the launch of the European Clean Hydrogen Alliance. They are establishing the European Hydrogen Economy and aim to deploy 6 GW of renewable hydrogen by 2024 and 40 GW by 2030.

The Greens/EFA call on the European Parliament to send a clear message to citizens and other institutions: only hydrogen from renewable energy shall be promoted at EU level. Supporting other types, which rely on fossil fuels or nuclear energy and, thus, produce emissions, is not compatible with EU climate and Green Deal goals.

Greens/EFA MEP: **Damien Carême** (Greens/EFA shadow in the Industry, Research and Energy committee)

Debate: Monday, 17 May. Vote: Wednesday, 19 May

More:

- [Green hydrogen & renewables: the EU should take the lead now!](#)
- [Hydrogen Strategy must not be excuse to continue polluting the planet](#)

Liability of companies for environmental damage

The report calls for the EU to recognise new types of environmental crime. The aim is to reinforce the legal enforcement tools used to fight against environmental crime caused by industry actors at national, EU and global levels, and to enable genuine access to justice for victims. This own-initiative report strongly signals to the Commission the Parliament's support for legislative action to review the Environmental Liability Directive (ELD) and the Environment Crime Directive (ECD).

The Greens/EFA Group asks for the ELD to be revised as soon as possible and to be transformed into a fully harmonised regulation, to be aligned with ECD and with the Paris Agreement. The Greens/EFA Group succeeded in its call for the report to acknowledge the “intrinsic value of the environment and ecosystems and their right to effective protection” ; to refer to ‘ecocide’ ; and to call on the Commission to carry out a study on how diffuse pollutions are approached by the different EU liability regimes.

Greens/EFA MEP: **Marie Toussaint** (shadow in the Legal Affairs committee)

Debate: Wednesday, 19 May. Vote: Thursday, 20 May

European Cyber Security Competence Centre

Led by Greens/EFA rapporteur **Rasmus Andresen**, the parliament's negotiation team reached an agreement with the council on the report on the European Cyber Security Competence Centre on 11 December 2020, which will now be debated and voted on by parliament. The initiative aims to increase Europe's resilience against cyber attacks through investing in the cybersecurity research and bring together a pool of relevant resources.

The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the initiative and its emphasis on joint actions at the European level that will lead to enhanced cooperation between the European Commission and Member States as well as industrial, research, academic and civil society stakeholders. Online activities are becoming more important in our daily and political lives, a strong European cybersecurity community is therefore needed.

Greens/EFA MEP: **Rasmus Andresen** (Rapporteur in the Industry, Research and Energy committee)
Debate: Wednesday, 19 May. Vote: Thursday, 20 May

Chinese counter sanctions on EU entities and MEPs and MPs

Following the imposition of arbitrary sanctions from the Chinese government against Greens/EFA MEP Reinhard Bütikofer, as well as other MEPs and the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, Belgian Green MP Samuel Cogolati, and others, the Parliament will vote on a resolution condemning the actions by the Chinese government. The Greens/EFA Group successfully negotiated for the European Parliament to condemn the baseless and arbitrary sanctions imposed by the Chinese authorities; taking the firm position that any consideration of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI), as well as any discussion on ratification by the Parliament will remain frozen as long as the Chinese sanctions are in place, and expecting the Commission to consult with the Parliament before taking any steps towards conclusion and signature of CAI; and the recall of its position that violations in Xinjiang amount to a crime against humanity.

Greens/EFA MEP: **Reinhard Bütikofer** (shadow and Chair of the European Parliament's China Delegation)
Debate: was in April. Vote: Thursday, 20 April

More:

- [China - Plenary debate on Chinese sanctions against EU citizens & bodies - quote from Reinhard Bütikofer MEP](#)
- [Greens/EFA condemn sanctions against MEPs by Chinese government](#)
- [Greens/EFA welcome targeted sanctions against Chinese officials & others](#)

MORE

- **Micha Bloss** and **Bas Eickhout** will hold a press briefing, ahead of the upcoming European Council Summit, where the **European Emission Trading system** will be discussed. To register, please send an email to Mia Müller: Mirjam.Muller@europarl.europa.eu.
- The full plenary agenda for the week can be found on the Parliament website [here](#).

The plenary sessions can be followed [live here](#).

GREENS/EFA PRESS CONTACTS

We are very pleased to welcome new team members to the Greens/EFA press team. A big welcome to **Mia**, **Valentina** and **Helena**, and many thanks to our intern **Aurore**! Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your press queries:

- Simon McKeagney (Head of Communication)
Simon.mckeagney@europarl.europa.eu
- Alex Johnson (EN)
Alex.Johnson@europarl.europa.eu
- Pia Kohorst (DE)
pia.kohorst@europarl.europa.eu
- Guendalina De Sario (FR)
guendalina.desario@europarl.europa.eu
- Helena Hellström Gefwert (EN)
helena.hellstrom@europarl.europa.eu
- Mia Müller (DE)
Mirjam.Muller@europarl.europa.eu
- Valentina Chiarini (FR)
valentina.chiarini@europarl.europa.eu

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Contact person



Alex Johnson

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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