

# GREENS/EFA **SUCCESSSES**

Our achievements in the European Parliament  
2014-2019



# THE GREENS EFA

The Greens/European Free Alliance is a political group in the European Parliament made up of Green, Pirate and Independent MEPs as well as MEPs from parties representing stateless nations and disadvantaged minorities.

Our Group currently counts with 52 MEPs from 18 countries and 5 regions. It is the fifth group in numerical importance in the European Parliament.



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Part 1

ECOLOGICAL  
**TRANSITION**



# Renewable energy and climate change

The Greens/EFA group have been the driving force in the adoption of “clean energy for all” legislation defining how the EU and Member States will **put the Paris Climate Agreement into practice**. It is **down to our efforts** that the European Parliament’s position is far broader and more ambitious than that of national governments.

The Greens/EFA group are the most ardent promoters of **renewable energy and energy efficiency** in the European Parliament. It was a Green success that the EU committed itself that by 2030 one third of all energy would come from renewable sources. Against the opposition of big energy companies, we have succeeded in enshrining into law the right for citizens’ consumption of renewable energy they produce themselves. We have also achieved the phasing out of palm oil as a biofuel in transport and will continue our fight against deforestation. We also introduced national building renovation strategies as well as Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEBs) as standard for all buildings by 2050 in EU law.

Thanks to the Greens/EFA group, European consumers will soon have a **simplified A to G scale label for energy performance** displayed on refrigerators, TVs, washing machines and other devices, which will make it far easier for individuals to make informed choices.

It’s vital that emissions from the transport sector are dramatically reduced if we are to avoid climate catastrophe. That is why the Greens/EFA group are substantially strengthening the regulation on CO2 **emission standards for new heavy-duty vehicles**, which would see large reductions in CO2 emissions from trucks and heavy goods vehicles, for the first time across the whole EU.

Women around the world are more adversely affected by climate change, that’s why the Greens/EFA group have ensured that the European Parliament adopted a strong position recognising the effects of climate change on gender. Thanks to us, the Parliament has adopted a definition of **climate justice** that truly underlines the threat that the climate crisis poses to human rights and development, and that the immediate and enormous burden that climate change poses to some countries must be shared by all. We also made sure that the Parliament recognises the role climate change is playing in driving migration and displacement.

# Environment

The Greens/EFA group was the leading force in the adoption of new rules on **waste management and the circular economy**. We managed to ensure that there will be more waste prevention, separate collections for bio-waste, increased recycling and reduced landfill. Thanks to us, we will see a reduction of toxic substances in products and waste, which will lead to safe collection and disposal of waste materials.

Following the shocking revelations and mass public outcry over the Dieselgate scandal, the Greens/EFA group made sure the European Parliament set up a special **Inquiry Committee on the Dieselgate scandal**. It revealed the true extent of emissions cheating across the auto-industry, the devastating impact on air quality, and the inaction of Member States and the Commission in enforcing existing legislation. Thanks to our efforts, new rules were set giving the Commission the power to monitor national authorities allowing for enhanced market surveillance and to organise EU-wide recall procedures and impose penalties on fraudulent manufacturers.

Thanks to the Greens/EFA group, the **fight against planned obsolescence is on the political agenda**, and we have proposed initiatives to extend the life of products for the benefit of consumers and businesses, their employees and the environment.

Plastic is clogging our rivers, seas and littering our lands with destructive and toxic consequences for animal and human health. That's why the Greens/EFA group are at the forefront of the fight against plastic pollution. We have been the driving force behind the **EU ban on plastic straws, plastic plates and cutlery and plastic cups**. Following our initiative the EU has also banned "oxo-degradable" plastics which is often marketed as bio-degradable, but in reality fragments and turn into micro-plastic.

# Food, agriculture and animal welfare

The Greens/EFA group led the reform of **Organic farming and labelling** and fought not only for clearer labelling but also for healthier, living soils, greater seed diversity and more thorough checks on imports.

We have taken up the call of the European Citizens' Initiative to "**Ban glyphosate** and protect people and the environment from toxic pesticides". The Greens/EFA group have succeeded in establishing a **special committee on the pesticides authorisation procedure in the EU that will critically assess which products are allowed to be sold on the EU-market.**

After it emerged that industry-funded studies have been the basis of decisions taken by the **European Food Safety Authority**, we took them to court for failing to give transparent and public access to the scientific studies on which they base their glyphosate re-authorisation proposal. And we won! The Court decided that the studies assessing the carcinogenic effects of glyphosate should be made public, and that the commercial interests of the companies could not be used as a reason to deny public access to these studies. This is a huge victory for transparency, consumer rights and the environment!

Thanks to our protest, the use of Glyphosate was only re-authorized for 5 instead of 15 years. That is a first huge step in ending the use of this dangerous toxic herbicide.

Given the hugely important role bees play in pollinating our food supply and the wider ecosystem and their rapidly declining populations, the Greens/EFA group led the fight to protect and save bees. By working with beekeepers and environmental groups, we have achieved an almost **complete ban on bee-killing pesticides** (neonicotinoids).

The Greens/EFA group have actively fought for proper criteria on the regulation of **endocrine disruptors**, which can cause cancers, birth defects, and other developmental disorders as well as damaging our hormone systems.

Given the worrying threat of **anti-microbial resistance**, the Greens/EFA group have been working for more than a decade with vets, environmentalists and animal welfare groups, against the overuse of antibiotics, especially in factory farming systems. We achieved a majority in Parliament in favour of banning the routine use of antibiotics in animal feed, while improving the use of certain drugs in **veterinary medicine**.

In order to safeguard the future of international fish stocks, and those communities who depend on fishing for food across the globe, the Greens/EFA group have ensured that all EU vessels will have to comply with EU regulations when fishing elsewhere in the world. **We also put an end to pulse fishing** - a particularly destructive form of fishing - from the July 2021 onwards.

The Greens/EFA group has successfully led the fight in the European Parliament **against the authorisation of new GMOs**. Down to our pressure, the Commission has refrained from authorising two new and potentially dangerous varieties of GMOs. The Greens/EFA group have ensured that all **seal products** are banned from the EU market.

The Greens/EFA group fully supported the European Citizen's Initiative on **animal transport** and pressed for an enquiry committee on this issue. We are now taking the European Parliament to court for their refusal to even consider the establishing of an enquiry committee.

Industrial chicken farming does not only breach all principles of animal welfare but also leads to enormous health risks for European consumers. That is why the Greens/EFA group insisted on a European Parliament resolution denouncing factory farming of chickens, calling for resolute action to remedy the situation and enforce the existing animal welfare law.

# Transport

Over the next few years, the European Commission will invest an extra €140 million in regional cross-border train connections, making life easier for border communities, thanks to the efforts of Greens/EFA MEPs.

Following the initiative of Greens/EFA MEPs, the European Parliament has rejected an attempt by the Commission to lower the **working conditions and social rights of workers** in the road transport field.

For several years, the Greens/EFA group have been calling for the **end of the unnecessary seasonal clock change**, which brings many discomforts, such as a lack of sleep, and endangers road safety. This call was finally heard by the Commission in 2018 when, after a public consultation, proposed to repeal the Directive and end the seasonal clock change.

As part of the urgent need to bring down emissions from the transport sector we have achieved an **EU-wide toll for trucks busses and vans** that will enforce the 'polluter-pays' principle on CO2 emissions and road construction costs.

The Greens/EFA group have fought for and won greater **rail passenger rights**, including the right to take bicycles on trains, a greater entitlement to compensation when trains are delayed and full rights even when travelling with several railway providers.

Start-ups have a key role to play for the sustainable, low emission mobility solutions of the future. This is why the Greens/EFA group was engaged as co-organisers, along with the European Commission and the Parliament, of the **European Prize for Mobility Start-ups**.



Part 2

GREEN AND  
SOCIAL  
**ECONOMY**



# Employment and social issues

**Employment/Posting of workers:** The Greens/EFA group have pushed for fairness and higher working standards across the EU. We have made sure that workers who provide a service in a Member State other than their country of origin will benefit, not only from the minimum wage, but also from **local levels of pay**.

**Transition/Green jobs:** We believe that the European Union should show solidarity with people losing their jobs, especially where certain regions or economic sectors are hit exceptionally hard. That is why Greens initiated a **European Fund for Transition** - which should help sectors and regions to develop sustainable jobs for the future. On work-life balance we have managed to win Parliamentary support for major progress towards gender equality. Thanks to the efforts of Greens/EFA MEPs, the Parliament is currently negotiating for **non-transferable parental leave rights for both parents, well-paid paternity leave, and carers leave**. Thanks in great part to the relentless efforts of the Greens/EFA, in the future, the right to ten days of paid paternity leave will apply to all EU countries, as well as the right to five days per year of carers leave and the right to four months of parental leave per parent (two of which will be non-transferable and paid).

**Workers' health: to protect workers from carcinogens,** the Greens/EFA group proposed and achieved the classification of **Diesel** as a carcinogenic substance for workers. We have ensured that the exposure of workers to diesel exhaust fumes in the workplace will be limited and that the health of workers is protected. This will help improve protection for at least 4 million workers and save **up to 100 000 lives over the next 50 years**.

The Greens/EFA group were responsible for the establishment of a **European Solidarity Corps**, giving young people the chance to participate in volunteer work and projects across the EU, while strengthening solidarity within Europe.

# Tax justice and budgetary control

The Greens/EFA group has been the driving force for a far tougher EU stance against **money laundering** and tighter controls on financial flows, through the adoption of the Anti-money Laundering Directive.

We played a key role in the creation of the European Parliament's special committees on **Lux Leaks and the Panama Papers**. The special committees investigated the scandals, which saw enormous public outcry, and helped to drive progress in the fight against tax evasion and money laundering.

After the Greens/EFA group published a damning report into how IKEA avoided up to €1 billion in taxes through various tax avoidance schemes, the EU Commission launched an in-depth probe into the tax arrangements of the company.

The Greens/EFA have been the most active group in the **fight against fraud** and in protecting the financial interests of the Union. We have managed to ensure that the European Parliament supported a number of concrete proposals to strengthen controls and stop fraud in the spending of public funds.

The Greens/EFA group was key in the fight against tax avoidance through cross-border cooperation on taxation. We have created an obligation for tax advisors to publish any cross-border tax-optimisation schemes they use.

# Economy, finance and investment

Thanks to the Greens/EFA group, the European Parliament has for the first time adopted a position in favour of Green Sustainable Finance.

Climate risks must now be taken into account when pensions funds make their investment decisions, as a result of the efforts of the Greens/EFA group.

The Greens/EFA Group succeeded in establishing criteria to ensure that the European Fund for Strategic Investments will be much better focused on Green infrastructure and projects related to climate change. The Greens/EFA has actively pushed for more ambitious sustainability objectives and climate-spending target set in the latest version of the Investment plan for Europe for 2021-2027: Invest-EU.

**Fighting austerity:** the Greens/EFA have successfully called for the establishment of a European Parliament Financial Assistance Working Group on Greece, which critically looks into the devastating effects of austerity programmes in the crisis-stuck country.

The Greens/EFA group has ensured that banks can no longer mis-sell their bonds to small investors by hiding the risks related to these financial products. This is an important step to avoid the bank resolution difficulties, like those that occurred in Italy and Spain.

## Culture

The Greens/EFA group have successfully fought for greater EU investments in the **Creative and Cultural Sectors** through the European Fund for Strategic Investments and the Creative Europe Programme.

We have been at the forefront of defending fundamental and **linguistic rights of minorities**.

Thanks to our initiative, the EU has established a new strand for cultural diplomacy and cultural cooperation in its foreign policy.



Part 3

EUROPEAN  
**VALUES AND  
DEMOCRACY**

PROTECT  
WHISTLEBLOWERS  
OUR HEROES





# EU values and the rule of law

When others have been willing to turn a blind eye to the corruption, abuses of power and erosion of the rule of law in Hungary, the Greens/EFA are the group responsible for the European Parliament's tough response to Viktor Orbán's authoritarian and anti-democratic policies. Our efforts resulted in the unprecedented call by the European Parliament requiring the **activation of Article 7** of the Lisbon treaty for the violation of fundamental rights and the rule of law in **Hungary**.

The Greens/EFA group are at the forefront of the fight for the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and democratic values in the EU. We initiated investigative missions by Members as well as a series of plenary debates looking into the situation of corruption and the safety of journalists in both in **Malta and Slovakia**, following the tragic murders of investigative journalists Daphne Caruana Galicia and Jan Kuciak.

With mass demonstrations against corruption and worrying attacks on the independence of the judiciary in Romania, the Greens/EFA group initiated a plenary debate on the situation in the country, which resulted in a resolution on the rule of law in Romania. The European Parliament took a clear stance in favour of the rule of law, against corruption and police violence and in defence of independent civil society organisations.

The Greens/EFA group have successfully established the creation of a pilot project to finance investigative journalism (€500,000 in grants) and setup a support scheme for investigative journalists.

A report authored by a Greens/EFA Member called for a EU Rights and Values program in support of civil society and the fight for democracy, equality and the Rule of Law in Member States. This is key step forward in times when the very principles of democracy and Rule of Law are under threat in many parts of Europe.

The Greens/EFA group have made sure that EU funds need to comply with the respect for fundamental rights and the principles recognised in the Charter of Fundamental Rights as well as ensuring the participation of civil society, environmental partners and social partners in the establishing and implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds.

Today NGOs make up an important part of any vibrant democracy. This is why the Greens/EFA opposed a reform that tried to limit financial support only to NGOs promoting the official policies of the European Union. Against the push of conservatives in the European Parliament, we successfully **defended the interest of NGOs** and helped to ensure a diverse civil society.

# Honest politics and honest businesses

The Greens/EFA group have long fought for more integrity and transparency in the EU institutions and achieved changes to the Parliament's internal rules. Thanks to the Greens/EFA, Members of the European Parliament will now be obliged to be transparent about the lobbies they meet when they draft legislation. This is a major step towards a more transparent and democratic Europe where citizens enjoy the right to know who influence the laws and control if legislation are made in the public interest and not unduly influenced by private interests.

Thanks to a Greens/EFA report, the European Parliament's rules have been changed so that lobbyists like Monsanto who refuse to appear before parliamentary committees, can now be banned from the Parliament altogether. MEPs are asked to only meet with registered lobbyists. We are also calling for far stricter rules on the declarations of external paid activities by MEPs and for more transparency around these activities and any potential conflict of interests.

The Greens/EFA want to be the frontrunner for transparency and accountability. That is why we are the only group that has strict rules on how our Members can use their 'General Expenditure Allowance', which is provided to MEPs to cover certain costs related to their work.

The Greens/EFA are also responsible for improvements to the European Commission's **ethics standards**, which excludes the appointment of Commissioners with family-related conflicts of interest and establishes that Commissioners and the Commission President must wait 2 and 3 years respectively, before they can embark on new lobbying roles.

Thanks to us, the Parliament also launched an investigation in the politically motivated fast-track appointment of the European Commission's Secretary General.

The Greens/EFA group were also the drivers behind the adoption of an EU-wide **Whistleblower protection directive**, which aims to protect those who wish to come forward when they encounter fraud and illegal practices in the workplace, whether in the public or private sector, without fear of recrimination.

# Protection of privacy and personal data

The Greens/EFA group have been the driving force behind protecting individuals' right to privacy through the adoption of the EU's strengthened **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, which ensures better protection against online and offline surveillance of citizens and consumers. From Japan to California, the GDPR serves as the global model for data protection laws.

The Greens/EFA group have had a huge impact on the European Parliament's position on **e-Privacy** reform that secures our electronic communications and mobile devices. We have succeeded in establishing mandatory privacy-by-default settings for browsers and smart phones, and strong protections against being tracked across the web by advertisers. We also ensured mandatory end-to-end encryption and a ban on government back doors.

The Greens/EFA group ensured that the **passenger data (PNR) agreement with Canada** was thoroughly assessed by the European Court of Justice before being ratified. The Court confirmed our assessment that the mass surveillance of all travellers is illegal, leading to other PNR agreements, as well as the EU directive, coming under scrutiny, and will likely not stand.

# Asylum and migration

**Reform of the Dublin System** – the Greens/EFA group were at the forefront asking for a European Asylum system based on solidarity and shared responsibility. We led the fight and gained support to abolish the ‘first country of entry’ criteria and substitute it with a permanent and automatic reallocation mechanism.

The Greens/EFA group built a large majority in the Parliament to call upon Member States to meet their commitments to **relocate** 160,000 refugees from Greece and Italy to their territories.

In several EU members states NGOs, mayors and civil society initiatives that help refugees in greatest danger, are facing government push back or even criminal charges. Thanks to the Greens/EFA group the European Parliament took a clear stand against the criminalisation of those providing humanitarian assistance to refugees. We fight to support their actions instead of their criminalisation.

The Greens/EFA have consistently been calling for the establishment of safe and legal pathways for migration for those seeking international or humanitarian protection. Thanks to our efforts, the European Commission now has to act and propose concrete legislation establishing a European Humanitarian Visa, which would allow persons seeking international protection to travel to the European Union safely.

# Women's rights

The Greens/EFA initiative for a European Parliament Resolution on **combatting sexual harassment** in the European institutions and our continuous pressure has led to the institutions adopting zero tolerance plans to fight and protect against sexual harassment.

The Greens/EFA group has stood side-by-side with Polish women in successfully fighting against a law designed to heavily restrict **women's access to safe abortion**. We worked with Polish activists on the ground, brought them to the European Parliament and helped to generate Europe-wide media attention.

The Greens/EFA group have actively **supported women** from El Salvador in their fight to change the criminal code that completely bans abortion in the country and successfully pushed for women to be released from prison who had been convicted to 30 years of prison for natural miscarriages.



Part 4

# EUROPE IN THE WORLD





# Trade and development

The Greens/EFA group have built up a coalition in the European Parliament against the **Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)** mechanism in free trade agreements. ISDS mechanisms, which were made famous by the failed TTIP treaty, are private tribunals, which largely privilege big corporations against states who may wish to regulate them.

**Conflict minerals:** thanks to the Greens/EFA group, for the first time in Europe, firms involved in the extraction and trade of minerals will be obliged to check whether their supply chain has links to armed conflicts and human rights abuses.

The Greens/EFA Group managed to build a large majority in the European Parliament demanding **strict controls of cyber-surveillance exports to countries violating human rights.**

The Greens/EFA Group was a driving force in the successful adoption of **new Anti-Dumping measures** to protect European industry against unfair competition and in developing a screening mechanism for foreign direct investment in sensitive technologies and critical infrastructure.

Thanks to the Greens/EFA group, the Parliament will negotiate for compulsory criteria on labour and environmental standards in EU Trade Agreements, paving the way for a UN binding instrument on business and human rights.

Thanks to us, the EU is finally tackling the issue of illegal timber trade between the EU and Vietnam. The Voluntary Agreement is an important first step in the fight against deforestation.

# Foreign affairs, human rights, peace, security and defence

As a result of a Greens/EFA group initiative, the European Parliament called for an **international treaty to ban killer robots**, otherwise known as 'lethal autonomous weapons systems', and obtained that no money from the European Defence Fund goes into the research and development of killer robots.

Thanks to a report drafted by a Greens/EFA MEP the European Parliament called for much stricter controls on arms exports, and arms embargoes against all countries that fail to uphold international humanitarian and human rights laws.

The Greens/EFA group initiated the call to High Representative Federica Mogherini and EU Member States to impose an **arms embargo against Saudi Arabia** for its crimes committed in the war in Yemen.

Thanks to us, the European Parliament asks for a strengthened EU Human Rights Sanctions Regime. The EU should freeze asset and establish visa bans of individuals responsible for gross Human Rights violations. The adoption of this resolution by the European Parliament sent a clear signal to Member States to act without delay.



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