

# A Green Future for Europe

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## ***Our European Perspective***

For Greens Europe has always meant more – geographically as well as politically – than the European Union. Since the start of the European Coordination of Green Parties in 1983 we always had Green parties inside and outside of the European Union as our member parties: At the moment our European Green Party includes 35 parties in 31 countries. And, especially in times of globalisation, environmental and social problems don't begin or stop at EU member countries' borders. For us Greens building a wall and closing one's eyes to what is happening abroad is not an option. We greens see the EU as a peace project and we recognize that enlargement is one of the principal means to reach that.

The increasing lack of social justice, especially concerning jobs and future perspectives for young women and men, the running down of human and citizens' rights in times of terrorism, the growing influence of organised crime, the nuclear backlash as well as the deterioration of ecological criteria and of course the stalemate at the EU institutional level are, among other things, of deep concern for Greens all over Europe – within and outside the EU.

The European Union for Greens had and still has one major aim: To build, after centuries of war and conflict, lasting peace and cooperation among the peoples of this continent, and after centuries of colonization, to have a positive impact on global politics. Especially the second aspect has not been achieved in a way Greens would like to see results. Therefore the focus of this paper is on the concern and urgent matters Greens see at Union level, because the state and politics of the European Union have decisive influence not only on what happens inside the European Union but also on the development of other parts of Europe as well as on other continents.

## **1. THE STATE OF THE EU**

The European Union is a historical success story. Never in European history have so many nations enjoyed peace for such a long time. In wide ranging respects, the EU has played a positive role for the political and economic, social and environmental evolution in Europe. The EU has contributed to the reunification of Europe. It has been a positive actor in the promotion of peaceful solutions to ongoing international conflicts. In building up a strong environmental policy framework, the EU became an international forerunner for the transition towards an ecologically sustainable society, although a lot of work still has to be done. The EU enlargement project has led to the democratic stabilisation of the European region. In its promotion of human and minority rights, anti-discrimination and gender policies, the EU chose a progressive path. The membership of the EU has led to the narrowing of economic disparities among the different European countries though without finding a solution to solve the question of inequalities within the boundaries of Europe.

However, at the moment, the EU as a project of people and states is in a political crisis. This became clear through the outcome of the referenda in the Netherlands and France. Presently, the debate about the EU is dominated by two perspectives that are not necessarily antithetical: On one hand, there is strong scepticism towards the EU, its lack of democratic transparency, its bureaucracy and towards what is perceived as the dominance of neo-liberal economic policies within the EU. This combines with a fear, shared by many people, of losing control over their own lives. On the other hand, people are hoping that the EU would guard the "European social model" with high social, environmental, consumer and other standards and protect them from the negative effects of economic globalisation. From the first perspective, the EU has gone too far, from the second, it has not done enough. Both, however, agree that the EU is not performing and delivering as it should.

Next to the standstill in the Constitution process, the recent reduction of the overall EU budget imposed by Member States in the framework of the financial perspectives 2007-2013 showed the depth of the crisis. The EU is faced with structural problems and shortcomings that have to be solved. The EU will have to find a new definition of its role in a political context of growing support for conservative and even nationalist ideologies in different member countries.

The EU is currently paying a heavy price for years of lack of political courage and lack of vision of many of its Member States political leaders. The way the decision making process is organised and the distribution of powers among the different levels of decision making in a EU with 25 member states is problematic. National governments can still block important decisions that would be a step forward in the integration process which represent advances for the environment, society and the lives of citizens. The choice for enlargement has been insufficiently accompanied by a strengthening of the civil society, the democratic procedures and institutions. The Amsterdam and Nice Treaties have missed important opportunities to improve the functioning of the EU.

The EU is faced with a democratic deficit at different levels. In several countries national politicians use the EU as a scapegoat for their own decisions and policies. Important aspects or domains of European decision-making escape democratic control on the national or European level and remain firmly in the hands of member states Governments and administrations. The division of competences among the different levels contributed to the fact that the EU tries to do too much in some domains and can do too little in others. The outcome of the referenda showed that large sections of the European population do not recognize themselves in the policies that are pursued in the name of the EU. In the eyes of many European citizens the EU has, just as so many national governments, chosen a path of competition instead of cooperation, which led to an alienation from the positive elements of the European integration process. Too many European citizens have the impression that they cannot influence what happens in the EU, whereas strong economic lobbies do have direct access to the decision-making process.

In its structure and workings, the EU has favoured and invested in a competitive market-led model of development over the promotion of a European Model of solidarity.. The contrast between on the one hand the 'hard law' of monetary rules and on the other hand the 'soft law' of the open coordination method in social policies is untenable. If the European project wants to convince the citizens, this stalemate has to be solved.

The arguments a growing group of politicians use in the enlargement debate are worrying. One cannot at the same time want a broad enlargement and not want to invest the necessary amount of money. Thinking that solidarity can be postponed or avoided is a dangerous strategy that may lead to short-term (national) political advantages, but may cause a heavy political price in the longer term, e.g. when security issues are concerned. It is equally important that the EU takes a closer look at the winners and losers of current policies (e.g. the Common Agricultural Policy) and corrects those procedures or rules that lead to a distortion of the solidarity mechanisms among the EU-members.

The crisis in the European project may to a large extent have to do with more fundamental problems of globalisation. The way the globalisation process is organised has led to a deeply rooted fear among the citizens. Social 'certainties' are evaporating, together with the trust citizens had in their institutions. The mainly economic globalisation process needs a stronger political answer. European politicians do not seem able to convince their citizens of the added value of the EU in this matter. In the eyes of many, the EU seems to be a motor of a negative globalisation process instead of being the solution for the many problems citizens perceive. This became clear in the discussion on e.g. the neo-liberal 'Bolkenstein Services

Directive', the port service directive, the working time directive, the pressure of the Commission to open the market for Genetically Modified Organisms.

But more fundamentally the effects of an unsustainable lifestyle can no longer be ignored or 'exported' to the other side of the world or the future generations. Up till recently the rich countries of (Western) Europe succeeded in keeping the negative fall-out of globalisation outside their doors. This is no longer true. Only a choice for ecological justice, which means that these same European countries will have to drastically reduce their ecological footprint as a precondition for a just and sustainable development of other parts of the world, can open the door to a safer and fair future.

## **2. OUR GREEN POLITICAL VISION ON EUROPE'S FUTURE**

We do need a politically and economically well integrated EU as an indispensable player in key policy areas and for key green goals. We want those areas to be defined clearly. And we want to ensure that efficient, transparent and democratic decision-making structures are in place to achieve those ends. Then, there are also areas where decision-making should best take place on the national, regional or on the local levels.

For us Greens the EU is a peace project and an international actor for peace and human rights. The EU has to take a stand for a sustainable future. The EU should safeguard our European social model. The EU must enhance consumer rights and health protection. The economic aspiration of the EU should be inspired in a green economic vision based on a redefinition of the market economy through ecological and social principles. The EU must redefine its economic goals so that the protection of the environment and the common good of people are given priority over private interests. The EU should become a global player for a just globalisation. The EU must stand for democracy, diversity, equality at all level and the rule of law...

### **➤ A Peace Project**

Peace in the EU has become "normal", which is a historic success for the EU. The recent enlargement and European re-unification solidifies the EU's role as a guarantor for peace. The EU must also develop a new neighbourhood policy to implement its obligations for building a solid base for common security with all those neighbours that will not join the EU. Solidarity, expressed in stronger and efficient democratic institutions is essential if we want peace, justice and security for present and future generations. The international community also expects Europe to play a global role for peace and human rights. A uni-polar world with one country as "sheriff" is not a safe world, nor is a world of multi-polar conflicts. European countries must unite to achieve success on the basis of multilateralism, with priority to prevention, disarmament and non-military conflict resolution.

### **➤ A Sustainable Future**

While being far from perfect, the establishment of relatively high environmental standards in the EU is one of its success stories. The EU should be the place where a sustainable and fair future takes shape. It is up to the EU to systematically make green choices in environmental, energy, transport, agricultural, consumer and scientific issues. Environmental policy also is economic innovation policy and creates jobs and economic opportunity. To invest in ecological sustainability is an investment in justice and security. Therefore we need ambitious policy targets and instruments to limit climate change, to create a sustainable transport structure, to preserve and strengthen biodiversity, to develop a sustainable

agriculture taking into account the green global perspective , and to support a research policy aiming at a more sustainable development.

### ➤ ***Strengthening our European Social Model***

The vast majority of Europeans support the European Social tradition, which values social justice, public services, gender justice, worker and consumer rights and environmental and health protection highly. Keeping this tradition alive in an increasingly competitive world can no longer be achieved at national level alone. To safeguard this tradition and to develop it into a common European social model we have to learn from different national experience. The strength of the EU will be necessary to balance the need for increased innovation, efficiency and competitiveness with the values of the European social model. Neither do we want to isolate Europe from the rest of the world. Nor do we want to pursue and export a lifestyle that weighs so heavily on our planet. Dealing with the environmental challenge therefore is a matter of social justice within our own societies as well as world-wide.

### ➤ ***Consumer Rights and Health Protection***

No matter if bird-flue or dioxin, in times of crisis consumers expects the EU to play a role in protecting their rights and their livelihood. Guaranteeing consumer rights in an open market is equally important, e.g. when consumers want safe food free of Genetically Modified Organisms. The EU is an indispensable tool for consumer and health protection - a role which member states alone can no longer play effectively. The precautionary principle must be applied throughout the whole food chain and clear rules on liability must also be established with regard to GMOs. A truly European policy on all of the issues mentioned here will require a strong-minded executive power that will defy the pressure of international corporations and governments if necessary, and that cooperates with developing countries to change the rules in international bodies.

### ➤ ***A Green Economic Vision for Europe***

Competitiveness should be defined accordingly to principles of general interest, in particular with environmental protection and social cohesion. For the Greens, shared progress in pursuit of the general interest and especially environmental protection and social cohesion comes before competition and competitiveness.

A central Green focus of our economic policy is our strategy of reducing the dependency on fossil fuels particularly the oil dependency and of guaranteeing a nuclear-free energy system. We pursue an innovation path that combines energy efficiency, energy saving and the development of renewable energies. For the Greens the phasing out of the civil and military nuclear technology is an absolute priority. In order to solve the problem of energy supplies we need to change our lifestyles and patterns of consumption. The EU must play a more active role in this policy area. With a single market and the Euro as common currency of a majority of member states more European economic policy cooperation is indispensable and neither ecological sustainability nor social cohesion is achievable without it. Stopping harmful tax competition is part of this task.

### ➤ ***A global Player for a more just Globalisation***

We need the EU as a strong global player to promote a globalisation based on solidarity and that is ecologically sustainable. Greens stand for fair trade. We support the introduction of a Tobin type tax at a European level. We want the EU to cooperate with developing countries and emerging powers in the promotion of sustainable development, with the participation of

the civil society. The globalisation of capital flows also requires a globalisation of democratic policy. This implies a stronger role for the UN, the international rule of law and the support of international justice.

### ➤ ***Democracy, Diversity, Migration and the Rule of Law***

There is no question that the European Union still has to improve in terms of democratic procedures. However, the EU has played and continues to play an important role to safeguard and demand democratic procedures and institutions in its member states, as well as the empowerment of women. This positive effect is true for old and new member states alike. The European Court, the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Ombudsman and the complaint procedure are important tools for citizens to protect their rights. Historical, cultural, ethnic and linguistic minorities must be recognized by the EU member states. The EU also has to co-ordinate its member-states in fighting for human rights, especially racism, homophobia, xenophobia, ageism anti-Islamism and anti-Semitism as well as in guaranteeing humanitarian standards for refugees, regulation for the integration of immigrants and the rule of law in the fight against international terrorism and organised crime. Special attention should be given to the Roma as they are subject to discrimination, de facto or by law, in several parts of Europe.

## **3. A DEMOCRATIC ARCHITECTURE FOR A PERFORMING EU**

Europe must redefine democracy in the supranational context, the Union being a sovereignty- sharing entity of its own kind that fuses elements of an international organisation and of an integrated system. It exercises directly those powers that have been conferred on it, but it is still not recognised as a fully legitimate democracy by its citizens. The European Constitutional Treaty could only find a partial answer to the democratisation deficit of the Union and we must continue to strive for the creation of a stable constitutional framework for the EU.

The common aim of the constitutions of all Member States is to link any exercise of power to guaranteed fundamental and civil rights; to democratic legitimacy; to the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government; to the separation of religion and state, to the public nature of legislation; to parliamentary and governmental judicial control of all action; and to the preservation of the rule of law. All these founding principles of a democratic order should be identifiable also at European Union level. They cannot be implemented through a decision-making system founded on intergovernmental co-operation.

We need an ambitious and coherent constitutional treaty. Besides the Charter of Fundamental Rights we Greens focus on strong parliamentary rights, on subsidiarity, on judicial guarantees, on citizen's initiative and European referenda as core elements of the new constitutional order we engage for. We Greens reiterate our engagement for a strengthened parliamentary democracy, transparency and the rule of law, anchored fundamental rights, the citizen's initiative and European referenda as core elements of the future constitutional settlement.

### ➤ ***European Parliament***

All legislative acts of the EU should be adopted, as originally proposed by the Convention, in public by the European parliament and the Legislative Council. For the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the EP should have the power of giving binding guidelines and to co-decide

the budget allocated. The role of the European Parliament has to be reinforced during the negotiation and the approval of International Treaties. As one branch of the legislation the European Parliament shall have, along with the Commission, the right of initiative regarding European legislation. In order to exclude that individual Member States continuously block the Union by means of a veto the Legislative Council shall decide on all matters of common legislation by a qualified majority vote.

The EP and the legislative Council have an equal right to control the exercise of the implementing powers of the Commission. The Commission's term of office shall be linked to the legislative period of the European Parliament. The President of the Commission shall be elected by the European Parliament and approved by the European Council. The Commission, including the Foreign Minister and each of its individual members shall be responsible to the European Parliament. The Commission President shall have a general full authority vis-à-vis his/her colleagues.

### ➤ **National Parliaments**

National parliaments have to play a strong and active role in the political life of the EU. Their successful involvement all along the EU legislation process is the key to an increased transparency and a broader public acceptance by the citizens. Successful involvement must not be limited to the political control of their governments' actions in the European arena. They should play an active role in implementing the subsidiary principle. Their European role should start with early analysis and opinions and - in case of a directive - ends with an elaborated and well-timed transposition at the national level. They must also participate in constituent assemblies drafting amendments for any major constitutional revision.

### ➤ **Subsidiarity**

Democracy within the EU manifests itself at different levels: towns and municipalities; regions; member states and the common Union. Subsidiarity is a basic value of the European Union. However the European Greens warn against the current trend to identify the concept of subsidiarity with the concept of general re-nationalisation. EU legislation must be in full coherence with the principle of subsidiarity. On account of its very nature, the Legislative Council - being a chamber of the states - shall have a special political responsibility to preserve subsidiarity. The Court of Justice is competent to judge on appeals contesting the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity or on conflicts of competences among the EU institutions, member states and member states' constitutionally recognised regions.

### ➤ **Political Parties**

European parties must play an important role in advancing European political integration. We Greens are in favour of transnational lists. 10 % of the seats for the European Parliament should be allocated to pan-EU lists. Thus in the European elections each citizen casts two votes, one for a national party, one for a European party. European parties can decide to nominate the top candidate on their list for the Commission presidency. This would raise the stakes of the European elections.

### ➤ **Court of Justice**

The European Court of Justice shall also be the constitutional court of the Union. The overall application of Union law shall be subject to its jurisdiction, including human rights. The possibility of recurring to the Court of Justice should be greatly improved, to include citizens

whose rights are violated and collective actions of environmental and social NGOs. All act in the framework of the Treaties shall be subject to its jurisdiction. All the members of the European Court of Justice must be confirmed by the EP after holding hearings.

#### ➤ **Citizen's Direct Participation**

The participation of the European citizens in the decision making process shall be guaranteed by the inclusion of a right of citizens' initiative, as well as a European referendum. A draft-law with at least one million signatures obtained from a number of Member States may be sent to the Commission in order for it to take a legislative initiative, provided the latter is compatible with the Constitution and, in particular, with the Charter of Fundamental Rights. This citizens' initiative would not affect the right of initiative of the European Parliament and the Commission, but it obliges both institutions to act or, in case they decide not to follow the demand of the petition by a qualified majority vote, to explain publicly the reasons without unreasonable delay.

#### **4. FUTURE ENLARGEMENT OF THE EU**

Enlargement of the EU from the initial 6 to the current 25 has been a success - however, without solution of the present constitutional crisis of the EU there will be no future enlargement beyond Bulgaria and Rumania if only because of the legal obstacles put up by the Treaty of Nice. .

The EU has rightly stuck to its commitments towards Croatia and Turkey. We welcome the start of membership negotiations with these two countries. We have always made clear where we see the shortcomings in the reforms in these countries and we certainly will continue to be reliable but critical supporters of both countries. The process of accession negotiations, by its very nature, is open-ended, but membership is the goal. As in the past we would welcome decisions from Switzerland, Norway and Iceland to join.

The European perspective for the Western Balkans has to be kept upright: stabilisation and peace on the Balkans must stay a key priority for the EU in the coming years. Therefore we want the EU to have a common strategy for the region. The level of regional cooperation between the countries of the Western Balkans is an important indication of their preparedness for EU membership, but finally each country must be judged on its own merits and negotiate its accession according to an individual time table.

Today, a possible start of accession talks with Ukraine or even other Eastern European countries lies behind the historical horizon. It remains to be seen whether that will change over the next 25 years. There is a European perspective for Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova. The time perspective for these countries, however, is to be seen on the very long term, and is dependent also on the substantive progress of the institutional reforms of the EU. In the meantime the EU should not hesitate to strengthen the cooperation with these countries.

For Greens the criteria laid down in Copenhagen in 1993 are the central benchmarks for the preparedness of any candidate to enter the EU. These criteria are not negotiable.

#### **5. (HOW) WILL WE GET A EUROPEAN CONSTITUTIONAL TREATY?**

We Greens are convinced that the European Union needs more than ever a constitutional settlement which strengthens parliamentary democracy, transparency and the rule of law,

anchors fundamental rights, develops citizenship and enhances the capacity of the Union to act effectively at home and abroad.

From our point of view the European Union needs to re-launch the constitutional process - simultaneously with radically improving its political performance. Democratisation and further steps to establish a European constitutional treaty has to go hand in hand with a change of the political orientation of the Union by the adoption of political initiatives and rules that respond adequately to the fears and the needs of the population. This implies, to tackle among others, the problems that people are facing in the social, economic, energy and environmental fields. The acceptance of the Union will only be enhanced if the citizens feel that the EU is not only focusing on completing the single market but but the instrument best suited to respond to the current challenges.

During the ongoing ratification process, it became obvious that substantial parts of the Constitution were not really controversial. The Charter of Fundamental Rights, the majority of the first part and a series of innovations in the third part of the Constitution, have encountered little or no criticism during the ratification process. Moreover, it is necessary to find a large consensus with regard to specific improvements such as the strengthening of the citizens initiatives, the introduction of a European referendum, the redressing of the contradiction between social objectives.

We do not believe in the solution currently proposed by the Conservatives and the Social democrats based on the addition of a protocol for each country that has rejected the Constitution, supposing this will allow to overcome the deadlock created by the negative referenda in France and in the Netherlands. A constitutional crisis of the dimension we are facing cannot be overcome by following the precedents of the solution found to overcome negative referenda in Denmark and/or in Ireland in the past.

At the same time we reject all proposals to continue with the current Nice Treaty just adapting it in order to make it operative in case the accession negotiations with Croatia and other Balkan countries are finalised.

Greens are convinced that we will need a new Convention to overcome the present roadblock. It should build on the basis laid by the 1st Convention. Therefore we reject any attempt to restart negotiations concerning a new treaty from scratch.

We think that the Constitutional Treaty as it stands should and can be improved. The Convention must receive a clear mandate which should include the lifting out of the policy part (part III) from the Constitution and the drawing up of a clear distinction between the revision clauses for the Constitution (roughly parts I,II and IV) and the Treaty roughly part III). The new Convention could be put in place after the French election and under the German Presidency. A strong political commitment to use all the possibilities of the new Convention to considerably improve the social dimension should also be part of the outcome of the process. Representatives of civil society should be included in the work of the new Convention. The constitutional part may only be named a "constitution" if it is concise and readable, contains binding fundamental rights and introduces a democratic architecture.

The Constitutional Treaty amended as we propose, i.e. the genuinely constitutional result of the Convention's work, should be ratified in a pan-EU referendum by dual majority parallel to the upcoming 2009 European Elections. The exact modalities should be decided during the second half of 2008 by the new Convention and the European Council. Greens will campaign for this referendum EU wide.

We are convinced that this proposal, which calls upon the European citizens to break the deadlock, is the best way to overcome Europe's constitutional crisis. A common constitutional decision that involves not only EU political institutions but the European public

and every citizen is the adequate answer to nationalistic narrow behaviour and national divisions.. We strongly believe that nothing less radical will work and that European citizens, when called upon to take the continents history into their hands, will move Europe forward. In this context we would welcome political initiatives to promote a structural enhanced cooperation with the aim of speeding up the European integration process. In this context, we would like to point out, however, that forms of enhanced cooperation should promote the achievement of the Union's aims, preserve its interests and reinforce the process of integration and be open to all the Member States at any time. We also want to make it clear that these possible forms of cooperation should not be implemented to the detriment of the efforts being made to arrive without undue delay at a Constitution for Europe.

## **6. GREENING EUROPE**

To improve the performance of the EU, to build new trust in the European institutions and to better meet the demands of the EU citizens, the EU must evaluate and, where necessary, redirect its core policies. Greening its orientation will help the EU to act in accordance with real needs and civic expectations. European Greens offer a “greening” strategy, led by our vision on Europe's future.

Against Green votes the EU budget planning 2007 – 2013 has been adopted in the European Parliament. Instead of investing into human resources and science in order to achieve the goal of becoming the most knowledge-based region in the world, most expenses are still allocated to the field of agriculture and structural funds. We as greens have to develop a long term strategy for a sustainable budget planning that is future oriented.

### **➤ Europe as a Peace Project**

The EU was built on a project of peace common to all European States. It should remain a peace project also in the future. The horrors of the Second World War have taught Europeans to see the use of force not as self-assertion but as failure. The European Union is a rather successful attempt to replace the law of the strongest by the strength of law. To settle conflicts not by intimidation and violence, but by rules, negotiation and jurisdiction. Hence, most Europeans are warm supporters of multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. They are against military force as long as peaceful means of conflict resolution have not been exhausted. Unfortunately, the citizens of the EU are more of one mind than their politicians. Because of disagreements between governments, the EU is too often absent from the world stage.

The European Greens do not acquiesce in these paralyzing divisions. The shortcomings and errors of US foreign policy in tackling today's security threats, such as terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, failed states, organized crime and climate change, are all too obvious. The EU, which embodies and practices a broader concept of security, should take more global responsibility. The activities which have forged European countries together should become the EU's external power: diplomacy, cultural dialogue, fair trade, development aid and the promotion of international law. Europe should become a nuclear arms free zone.

The role of Europe, which has helped bring about or supported positive institutional changes in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Catalunya and the Basque Country, must be reinforced to enable it to help resolve internal conflicts within EU member states, especially where they concern protection of minorities and stateless nations, thereby helping to build a peaceful future.

There is support amongst European citizens for a more integrated European foreign and security policy. Europe needs the minister of Foreign Affairs foreseen in the Constitution, but it also needs to do away with vetoes. As a step towards more effective decision-making, the Council of Ministers should decide by qualified majority upon proposals put forward by the EU minister of Foreign Affairs. At the same time, the EU minister's accountability towards the European Parliament should be enhanced. The EP should be given the power of formulating binding guidelines in foreign policy issues and real powers in controlling EU external policies. Whenever the EU has a common position, the EU minister should defend this position in the UN Security Council. Ultimately, the EU should have its own permanent seat in the Security Council.

Even as a civil power the EU needs its own military means. They are a last resort when conflict prevention and civilian crisis management have failed. The EU should no longer be dependent on NATO for preserving peace on the European continent including the Western Balkans. This does not require more military spending. It does require better cooperation, a clear distribution of tasks and integration of military capabilities. Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons however can never be part of EU's military instruments. The present nuclear, chemical and biological weapons have to be banned."

The EU should take an initiative for global disarmament, starting with negotiations for the removal from its own territory of all mass destruction weapons and the gradual conversion of military expenditure and productions into socially useful and environmentally sustainable ones

Military interventions should always be carried out in conformity with the UN Charter with the aim of achieving lasting peace, not to secure oil supplies and the like. The European Court of Justice should have jurisdiction over the EU's foreign and security policy. Military operations should require the consent of both the European Parliament and the national parliaments of the participating member states and a UN mandate. Under no circumstances should EU military forces be used to repulse refugees or as internal police force. The EU renounces to export armaments in order to promote peace and disarmament and therefore as a first step the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Export should be legally binding and arms trade treaty should be adapted. The EU endorses a Europe free of nuclear weapons and supports a ban of nuclear weapons in general. A common EU foreign and Security policy must not inspire fear into Europe's neighbours or its own citizens; it must help building mutual trust.

### ➤ ***Creating a Sustainable Future***

Improved protection of the environment and resource base is one of the most important tasks of European political leaders. It is also one of the main activities that citizens of the European Union expect of the EU. Euro barometer polls show that over two thirds want decision-makers to give equal weight to environmental, economic and social policies.

However, while there are improvements in some areas, on the balance, pressure on the environment is increasing. Total global use of natural resources is estimated to be about 20 per cent above what the planet can produce. The average citizen of EU-25 uses more than twice the global average.

Clearly, this is unsustainable. We must reduce the environmental impact of our production and consumption patterns to sustainable levels, or future generations will pay the price. Consumption of resources and ecological services must be more equitably shared; the alternative is increased conflict over declining resources.

The EU has led to specific improvements in environmental protection in each of its member states. In some countries measures to protect the environment come mainly from the EU. In others with a high standard it has tended to lower that standard.

Disturbingly, the past few years have witnessed a change in the wrong direction in the EU. Environmental concerns are given lower priority than “competitiveness”, for example in chemicals policy, transportation and energy. We need to recognise that ecologically sustainable use of our resources is a in the long term precondition for employment and economic progress, and can even improve them in the short term

In particular, the free movement of goods must not be given higher priority than protection of the environment and health. This applies both within the EU and in relations between the EU and the rest of the world. In the absence of adequate environmental and competition safeguards, further market integration can have serious consequences both for the environment and environmental policy.

Basic principles of EU environmental policy, the "polluter pays" principle, the precautionary principle, and the principle of rectification of pollution at source, are important and must be implemented. This includes better enforcement of EU environmental regulations and standards. These principles must be supplemented by the substitution principle for dangerous chemicals, the principle of the conservation of biodiversity, and the principle of keeping resource use and environmental impact within the fair share of environmental space or ecological footprint of Europe.

Taking into account that one of the most serious problems the world is facing at the moment is climate change, the EU must act in a stronger way to stop the global warming. Possible instruments could be an EU-wide taxation on kerosene or a European ecological taxation.

We must hasten decoupling the increase of economic growth from an increase in resource use and environmental impact. Resource use and environmental impact must be decreased in absolute terms.

Integration of environmental and animal welfare concerns into other EU policies, as required by the Treaty, must be implemented in practise. In particular, an environmental fiscal reform is needed, whereby resource use and environmental pressures are taxed and other taxes or funding sources are reduced. The EU agricultural policy should make a radical shift towards ecological production, animal welfare and fair trade. Export subsidies for agricultural products are stopped.

It is also urgent to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies. Other priority areas for increased integration of environmental requirements into sectorial policies are research, structural funds, agriculture fisheries, transportation and energy.

Euratom needs to be scrapped or completely made over into an agency for a sustainable transformation of our energy system. Countries which have developed their wealth during the era of cheap fossil fuels have the resources and the responsibility to develop and introduce technology which is clean, efficient and increasingly based on renewable resources. This should be a prime focus of European research and development.

We can achieve the goal of a sustainable Europe with an attractive quality of life, but it will require a change of focus for decision-makers at all levels. It will require a re-orientation of policies, research and investments, and reconsideration of out-dated ideas about what is necessary for a good life. The European Green Party and its national member parties will continue to work together for concrete actions towards this goal on the European, national and local levels.

## ➤ **Strengthening the European Social Model**

Only if the social dimension of the EU is strengthened and is perceived as such by the citizens will the public support for the integration process increase.

For the Greens, the sustainable development of the European societies fully encompasses the social dimension; it is simply not thinkable that the European Union would restrict its role to promote Europe as an integrated economic and financial market, while ignoring the need for social cohesion and for improving the living and working conditions of European citizens and people worldwide.

We do recognize that a majority of Governments currently in place advocate, explicitly or *de facto* a European Union which would indeed work as a single market only, putting the national welfare systems in unbound competition with each other, leading them (as well as the fiscal and environmental protection systems) to a downward spiral. This is something Greens stand firmly opposed to.

For Greens, welfare systems, in order to be sustainable and successful, must enjoy widespread support among the population they serve and therefore be built upon its shared values. Since those may differ from country to country, it follows that there is no “one size fits all” welfare system and that the choices in terms of systems – and of the way they should be improved and strengthened to withstand the ravages of a form of globalisation which relies on a combination of free trade and authoritarian regimes (China being a case in point) should be primarily left to the member-states. Cooperation between any number of them in order to reach a greater convergence can only be voluntary but would most certainly be welcome. However, this does not imply that the European Union should have no role on social policy. On the contrary, beside the monetary union the European Union has to become a social Union. Indeed, the EU must face the new stakes raised by globalization, that is to say competition between national systems and the weakening of the European social fabric.”

First of all, the Union must ensure that the legislative measures it takes and the policies it carries in the economic, financial and world trade domains do not *de facto* weaken or make impossible the social policies of the member states. The whole balance of the EU’s policies needs to shift in favour of social and environmental considerations.

Regarding services of general interest, Greens consider that public services such as education, health, water, should not be subject to market mechanisms. In other domains, especially as far as services of general economic interest are concerned, e.g. public transport, Greens will always consider the possibility for public authorities to use market mechanisms such as controlled competition, i.e. competitive tendering, to efficiently spend the taxpayer’s money and, at the same time, guarantee a high level of service quality. The choice between liberalization or not should be left – with due consideration to competition and state aid law - at the appropriate local, regional or national level, without however allowing undue monopolistic advantages in markets that are liberalized; therefore, the Greens favour the reciprocity principle, meaning that public companies that have “in house” public service contracts should not be allowed to take part in competition in open markets.

Greens are convinced that we need a common European tax policy in order to stop the fatal tax competition between member states. As a first step, Greens consider that the European Union should set minimum rates of corporate, capital and environment taxation, thereby preventing unbound competition between member-states and allowing them to have the means to fund their welfare systems on a sufficient and better balanced manner (away from a labour-base only). We consider that the European Union should also set social and fiscal criteria of convergence on levels of child poverty and long-term unemployment.

The EU should encourage its member states to set a minimum level of subsistence or “basic wage”, taking into account national differences, thereby ensuring a downward limit to the effects of competition. The EU should provide the framework for EU-wide collective labour agreements, covering topics such as working conditions, training, wages; the EU Commission should be given the authority to make such agreements binding for all companies in the sectors concerned. The EU should also enhance its legislation on non-discrimination, especially as regards gender, ethnic origin, disabilities and sexual orientation. It should also strengthen corporate social responsibility rules to promote a more socially and environmentally responsible market.

### ➤ **Consumer Rights and Health Protection**

The big food and health scares of the past years (BSE, Dioxin, Salmonella, contamination by GMO and MPA, etc) have undermined consumer’s trust in food, especially in meat and processed food, but also in the ability of politicians to solve the problems. While the European Union has made some wide ranging proposals for increasing food safety throughout the food chain, these initiatives are not sufficient and have often been blocked or delayed by the member states. International consumption and exceeding markets need a reliable judicial framework and a responsible and confiding commerce of the market partners for a fair, social and sustainable consumption culture in Europe. We need to strengthen and inform consumers, stand for their health and economic interests to assure a prosperous European economic policy.

The precautionary principle to food production adopted by the EU must not be limited to residues or end-of-the-pipe controls on final products. Verifiable standards guaranteeing healthy food products must be enforced all the way throughout the food chain, from the production process, the cultivation of crops and fodder to the final processing including the workplaces and the environment. These standards are required by the regulation on organic farming of the EU and should in the future also be applied for conventional food production, be it from agriculture, fishing or fish farming. Mass production must undergo tight rules to ensure appropriate conditions according to the species

#### **In order to make better and healthier food, it is necessary to**

- Limit intensive agro-industrial production by discouraging intensive farming and fish farming practice through strict enforcement of environmental, animal welfare and food safety legislation;
- evaluate the impact of fish-farming which uses animal-based feedstuffs on global fish stocks and the food safety of developing countries;
- enforce standards which guarantee food safety, without limiting the necessary flexibility of implementation needed to maintain and diversify regional and local food production;
- enlarge the definition of quality standards, in order to include the wide differences of food culture and taste;
- provide consumers with all relevant information about a product’s origin and the way in which it was produced through a EU regulation on consumer information;
- effectively control the implementation of food laws at all stages of food production;
- apply the precautionary principle throughout the whole food chain and establish clear rules on liability;
- stimulate consumers’ choice for a healthy diet.
- control unnecessary food packaging and promote environmentally friendly packaging'

But food quality is only one aspect to enhance health and consumer rights. Consumer protection and public health must be present in all European policies (industrial, trade, agriculture, regional, food, etc).

Greens acknowledge the increasing demand from consumers for medical pluralism including alternative medicine. The EU should support the request of consumers for more freedom of choice and their demand for more information and expertise.

### **Facing the risk of new epidemics**

Greens acknowledge the relation between increasing diseases like allergies and respiratory infections and the increasing pressure on our environment through use of pesticides, chemicals and other polluting substances.”

In this frame, Greens are committed to promote a strong directive on REACH. The directive seems to be largely insufficient both at the level of the control procedure and at the level of the dangerous substances list. Toxic contamination through chemicals and incineration of waste has to be stopped. A rigorous evaluation of safety risks has to be assured.

At the same time we are facing new world outbreaks. Avian flu, AIDS, SARS, Malaria, are crossing not only the country borders but also the species borders, and affecting humans. According to the Treaties, the EU has a clear responsibility together with member states in preventing illnesses and diseases and protecting human health.

Furthermore, Greens ask for the enhancement of the rights of consumer protection organizations. Directives on door-to-door sales, consumer credits, distance selling, package tours, product liability should be strengthened.

### **➤ *A Green economic vision for Europe: Redefining the market economy through ecological and social principles***

The Greens are in favour of competition rules in the economy, provided they consist of instruments aimed at achieving an just and fair objective, rather than being themselves an objective per se.

Services of general interest, like health, education and public transport are pillars of a sustainable development strategy. Europe needs strong and modern services of general interest. These services already account for more than 35% of total employment in the EU and are central to the development of a successful knowledge-based economy. It is therefore essential to ensure that there is growth in public supply and expenditure on these services. In full respect of the subsidiarity principle, public authorities at all levels, which are democratically accountable to the citizens, must be free to choose how to finance and organise these services. A European legislation should confer legal certainty to these principles. The social enterprise and voluntary sector must be granted recognition by the EU policies. This sector of the economy, which ranges from co-operatives to small businesses via the many and varied forms of voluntary organisations, operates within the competitive framework and creates many jobs in innovative or burgeoning sectors such as the environment and services to individuals.

The Greens are in favour of a mixed economic system of public services and private enterprises. Competition is not a goal but an instrument to improve the quality of products and services, which leads to innovations and affordable prices. A Green and social economy means that competitiveness should be compatible with pursuing general interest objectives,

and in particular social cohesion, environmental protection, and fair trade which are the cornerstones of sustainable development. It also means that it should be compatible with a growing influence of workers on the policy of their companies. This implies that when promoting small and medium enterprises the EU should include social enterprises and cooperatives in these policies.

There are ecological limits to economic development. This is particularly evident in the light of the energy issue and the climate change. With the turning point of the so-called peak-oil crisis expected to occur in the next ten years, Europe needs more than ever a new European energy culture. A massive uptake of renewable energy sources is necessary, as well as increased changes in the lifestyles, patterns of consumption, modes of transport and efforts in terms of energy efficiency and conservation. Besides, an efficient and competitive European energy market requires reducing market concentration. Regulatory instruments, including fiscal tools, should be used to encourage the development of new market actors in the renewable energy sector. Similarly, the development of a knowledge-based economy should be coherent with a sustainable development strategy. The research and development policy and the innovation policy should focus on environment-friendly technologies. Indeed, eco-efficiency is the most evident characteristic of modern, advanced economies. Also in this sense, the nuclear energy market is an example not to be followed. Beside the dramatic ecological and security implications, it goes against our conception of general interest and against our idea of competition. In terms of the buying price of impoverished uranium, the costs involved in stocking waste as well as the costs engendered to make sites secure, the price of nuclear energy is far too high

Macro-economic policy instruments should serve to meet the needs of European society. Through the changes brought in March 2005, the Stability and Growth Pact should provide for more adherence on the national levels, while allowing for more margin on the EU level. The focus should be on public and private investment in order to reduce unemployment. What Europe needs is to boost the public and private expenditures in eco-efficient technologies and their dissemination in the economic production. The new market procurement legislation should also be used to foster the demand for such technologies. Fiscal policy should also serve sustainable development. Europe needs more fiscal cooperation, rather than fiscal competition, in order to preserve and enhance the financial means required for ambitious public policies. In this respect, a European coordination of environmental tax reforms and of company taxation is necessary.

The EU budget should be brought to a level which corresponds to the political competences of the Union. It is not possible to implement sustainable development policies in the context of the enlarged EU with a budget limited to 1% of the EU GDP. Similarly, the distribution of these expenditures should be refocused to meet priority needs, including sustainability, environmental innovation, the Common Foreign policy and the Development Cooperation Policy.

### ➤ **Europe as Actor for a just Globalisation**

A purely defensive approach towards globalisation is a deadlock. Neither an "*adaptive*" paradigm- based on the idea that globalisation is a phenomenon originating outside the EU, and to which the EU has to adapt - nor a "*protective*" paradigm - based on the idea that the EU (as a whole, or at the level of Member States) should reduce its involvement in the global economy through barriers against the free movement of goods, services, capital and persons – serves the interests of the citizens of the EU or of the rest of the world.

Greens advocate more offensive responses of the EU, whose role can be determinant in re-orienting the current globalisation process towards win-win strategies. Being already the

world's biggest economic actor, the EU should fully take its responsibility in this respect. Therefore Greens demand a commitment of the EU to diminish its negative impact on the global ecosystem. The choice for a far reaching eco-efficiency strategy within the EU is a condition for a just globalisation.

The Greens equally demand a commitment of the EU to turn negative social impacts of globalisation into positive ones, especially in developing countries. The EU should use its economic weight to enable the timely realization of the UN Millennium goals and the observance of fundamental labour rights. In order to prevent 'social neo-colonialism' this process should be developed in close cooperation with the developing countries.

Greens encourage regional-continental integration processes in other parts of the world based on democratic values and the full respect of human rights (Africa, Latin-America, etc.).

Greens encourage the development of services of general interest. They are aware of the key role played by public authorities in the economic development in the EU as well as abroad. The relevant authorities should be able to opt to exempt public services and services of general interest from the rules on competition.

Greens see it as an obligation to preserve and enhance the effectiveness of public spending. Within the EU as well as abroad, overly restrictive fiscal and monetary policies represent obstacles which prevent public authorities from properly addressing social and environmental needs.

Greens encourage a research-development (R&D) policy which is coherent with sustainable development; R&D and innovation should focus on environment-friendly technologies; fundamental research should at least be equally developed as applied research; within the EU as well as abroad education should be a priority.

The EU needs proper institutions for being a global economic actor. It is impossible for the EU to play a decisive role in re-orienting the current globalisation process as long as the institutional framework does not provide the EU with the adequate competencies in this field. The competencies given to the EU concerning trade policies (Article 133) need to be extended to foreign affairs policies and allow a more coherent policy in the international financial area. Agreements proposed in these fields need to be approved by the European Parliament and the Council. On a global level, policies on economics, social development and environmental issues need to be governed coherently. Therefore, WTO, UNEP and ILO must become equal pillars of the UN system with the same democratic decision rules. For WTO, this needs to result in a strict definition of services that fall under the rule of WTO. Public services should be excluded. We encourage the institutions of the EU to make every endeavour to facilitate the reform process of the WTO in a proactive manner.

Free trade must be compatible with fair trade. This means that prices must mirror the real social and environmental costs linked to production and transport. The Greens promote the idea of restricting access to the European market for goods whose production and/or distribution contravenes basic social and environmental requirements such as the ILO conventions. This also means that Europe must set an example and stop its overproduction of agricultural products. The surplus is currently dumped on foreign markets, including the markets of developing countries, with the help of subsidies

Sustainability should be inherent to all development policies. Development objectives have to be based on human rights principles, poverty reduction, conflict prevention, democratic participation and empowerment of women as well as energy efficiency, consumers' rights and preserving of the environment. The EU should concretise its commitment to raise the financial means affected to the developing countries. A "Tobin type tax" on the movement of capital, must be created with the twofold objective to fight financial speculation and to raise

funds for the development. We are devoted to reaching the goal of 0.7% of Official Development Assistance by 2015, excluding debt relief from being ODA-accredited. The process towards reaching this objective itself should be accelerated in all EU Member States. We want the EU to give itself the necessary means and mechanisms to combat money laundering, fiscal fraud and tax evasion, both on a European and a global level.

### ➤ **Democracy, Diversity and the Rule of Law**

For Greens democracy is a fundamental value. Democracy includes fair representation, citizen participation and direct democratic instruments. There is a growing criticism about the limits of democratic involvement among European citizens. Greens share the demand for an extension of instruments to allow better civic participation. One instrument that could become a new source of democratic legitimacy of the EU and its constitution is an EU-wide referendum. Another instrument is the popular initiative which could forge new cross-border links between citizens, NGOs and political parties that would campaign together. In European civil society NGOs that represent social, cultural, legal and environmental interests play an important role. These groups should be granted more access to political decision making at the EU level. Therefore Greens support NGOs in getting consultative status with those institutions relevant to their area of work and getting better access to the Court of Justice.

Organized crime has been intensifying its involvement also in the environmental sector: waste management, public works and construction, the spending of the very EU subsidies are particularly at risk, with all which goes along in terms of bribing, money laundering and breach of the rule of law. The EU should set up ad hoc anti-eco-mafia units, require OLAF to do the same and launch a targeted EU-wide rule of law awareness campaign.

Access to culture for all, the recognition and safeguarding of all cultures, and the promotion of European languages and cultures in all their diversity must be guaranteed and facilitated by the EU.

The recognition of our language and culture and the freedom to practice and teach them are fundamental rights. So-called minority cultures and languages, which are still alive in some EU territories, must be recognized

Although culture is at present substantially a matter of national policy, exchanges and cross-fertilisation between the various European cultures represent an opportunity. To raise awareness of the benefits of sharing this cultural diversity as widely as possible, we need to step up cultural exchanges such as twinning programmes between European towns and villages.

To help strengthen the sense of belonging to this diverse European culture, we must enable as many young people as possible to study in another European country, whether on academic or vocational courses, by increasing substantially the budgets allocated to exchange programmes such as Erasmus, Socrates or Leonardo.

### ➤ **Migration**

Rarely in the course of history have there been such huge inequalities between North and South, between richer and poorer regions, and these inequalities are made more visible by the globalisation of trade and information flows. Large numbers of migrants risk their lives in the effort to reach the shores of Europe in search for a decent standard of living.

Not only does the European Union refuse to legislate to integrate migrants without residency permits, many of whom are victims of human traffickers, it is attempting to compel their countries of origin to close their borders to emigrants, in denial of the right to free circulation in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

However high fences, however strict border controls may be, illegal migrants will continue to come, if only because there is a demand for their labour in Europe. As migration cannot be stopped, we must cease to see migrants as a threat. They bring us their talents and energy. We must provide ourselves with the means to regulate migration, both by welcoming migrants in a decent fashion and by implementing a genuine co-development policy with their regions of origin.

In a Union without internal borders, this demands a EU-wide approach. The European Commission should present and implement a concept of a coordinated policy in this field. The interests of the labour migrants' countries of origin must also be taken into account, for instance by promoting circular forms of migration whereby migrants use the skills and capital they have acquired in Europe for the development of their home country. The wealth represented by money sent home to their families by emigrants is by far the largest financial resource of these countries.

Moreover, the EU should destine more of its resources to the eradication of poverty and the development of permanent democratic structures in the poorer part of the world.

Concerning the European refugee policy the goal to ensure the respect of the Geneva Convention all over the EU has failed. Still, there is no alternative for a European approach. The only chance to reverse the downward spiral is a new, more democratic legislative process, in which the European Parliament can exercise its recently acquired right of co-decision.

Asylum seekers are to be treated with dignity and respect as they await the results of their applications. Solidarity is needed to prevent some EU countries being overburdened by this task while others hardly contribute to refugee protection. The Dublin Convention, which stipulates that asylum seekers must file their application in the country where they enter the EU, should be rendered more flexible for those countries under excessive pressure. In the end, there should be a European asylum system which deserves its name and is truly common, funded from the EU budget.

## ➤ **Justice**

The European Union has an important role to play in combating cross-border crime and terrorism. Nowadays, however, the increasing justice and police cooperation too often encroaches upon fundamental rights such as privacy and the right to a fair trial.

In the coming decades, technology will become available for governments to put all their residents under permanent surveillance. The Greens reject such a *Big Brother* society. The EU should be a champion of fundamental rights. These include the principle of non-discrimination. This principle should be rigorously enforced so as to prevent governments from treating entire segments of their populations as terrorism suspects. If Europe manages to uphold individual freedoms and tolerance, it can become a magnet for creative talents from all over the world.

Therefore, the Greens want the Charter of Fundamental Rights to become binding for all EU institutions as soon as possible. We also want the European Neighbourhood Policy systematically to include a human rights component as part of the remit of the EU Agency of Fundamental Rights.

The EU should also accede to the European Convention on Human Rights. European law-making on justice and home affairs should no longer be the prerogative of national ministers, gathering behind closed doors, but a matter of co-decision between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. However, applying the community method to criminal law requires a restrictive definition of the crimes the EU is competent to tackle. It should be made explicit that the fight against serious cross-border crime does not extend itself to issues such as abortion, voluntary euthanasia or the local sale of soft drugs. As the Union expands, so does the diversity of ethic concepts amongst its citizens. An EU which doesn't respect this diversity will be perceived as a threat to national and personal freedoms.

Once the above-mentioned checks and guarantees are in place, the prosecution of a well-defined set of cross-border crimes, such as fraud against the EU budget, should be entrusted to a European Public Prosecutor. We can even envisage the introduction of a European Intelligence Service, to facilitate the cooperation between national services which nowadays is cumbersome. The democratic control over such agencies should be jointly exercised by the European Parliament and national parliaments. Close co-operation with the Council of Europe will make the EU more effective in the area of human rights. The EU must have a seat on the Council of Europe, which in turn must be represented on the governing bodies of the Agency of Fundamental Rights.

## **CONCLUSION**

We European Greens firmly stand for the further political integration of Europe.

We need the Union because it has demonstrated its ability to create and maintain peace among its members, and peace is never to be taken for granted, within or outside of Europe. We need the Union because responding to the challenges of global warming and other environmental threats is beyond any nation state's sole capabilities. We need the Union because unrestrained competition between national social security systems brings the social cohesion in our countries in a downward spiral. We need the Union because diseases know no borders. We need the Union in order to find the critical mass to generate a new – greener – wave of value creation and thereby respond to the mass unemployment in our countries. We need the Union to promote a more just globalization, fairer, more respectful of the quality of life of all the world's inhabitants, more caring for the environment, more sensitive to diversity. We need the Union because it is our common responsibility – not just that of the States at the current borders of the Union – to provide an answer to the migrations. These few – but essential – examples already make a compelling case for acting together, in an integrated way at the European level.

Of course, the European Union is neither an end in itself nor a cure for all of Europe's problems – let alone the planets': some can be tackled at a lower level: local, regional, national; some others demand a truly global approach. But in our perspective, no one can deny, neither the accomplishments nor, the relevance of the European Union in tackling some of the most crucial issues we face as Europeans.

The European Union is today at a critical juncture. Long gone seems to be the undoubting faith of the founders, while the visionary push that presided over the reunification of the continent after the fall of the Berlin wall has exhausted its energy. The Union is adrift, managed by a caretaker Commission; proposals and decisions often are too bureaucratic and sow too little concern with people's social and environmental concerns; popular support for the EU has evaporated in too many places. Most member-state governments either foster a culture of competition rather than of cooperation inside the EU, or as a scapegoat for unpopular decisions they want or have to make at national level.

In order to get the Union out of the ditch, we need a new impetus. This requires at least three major conditions. The first is that political leaders across the continent radically shift away from the current narrow politically correct euro-sceptic attitudes and openly recognize the added value – in fact the indispensable need – of a political European Union. The second is that they start steering the Union towards tackling efficiently and effectively the major challenges that we face as Europeans and as citizens of the Earth, of which we mentioned some of the key ones above. Last but not least, we need all social actors – NGO's, trade unions, ... - who are both mobilized by those issues and rightfully concerned by the apparent inability and unwillingness of the Union's current political leadership to address them, to find ways to jointly build up the pressure to force the changes outlined above.

We as European Greens are prepared to live up to this challenge. We also know that we will not achieve this alone, and that we do not own all the solutions. Others on the political and social scenes have a vision, ideas and energy to bring to bear and we will need to join forces to give shape to a renewed European Union. This paper is our contribution to what must be a fundamental debate across the Union – and within each potential applicant country as well, to get the European Union again on the go and thereby give a socially and ecologically sustainable future to Europe.