



1 **Renewing and rejuvenating the Greens**

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3 When analysing the results of the 2014 European elections it is clear that if young people had
4 a say, the debate on whether we need a European Union would be much less sceptical¹.
5 Moreover, when looking at voters' preferences, you can see that if the turnout among young
6 people was higher, progressive parties, and Green parties in particular, would have a much
7 greater presence in elected bodies².

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9 ~~A fundamental reason why some young people are not engaging in politics across
10 Europe is the lack of candidates who look like them and are living the experiences they
11 are. Too few political parties have been successful in addressing the main concerns of
12 young people and are not bringing the ultimate progressive solutions that young
13 people want. Green Parties across Europe recognise the importance of adequate
14 representation. For example, there are several younger green members of the Swedish
15 and Scottish parliament, across councils in the UK and The Netherlands, and in the
16 European Parliament. However, we need to push further and focus more on
17 candidates that have a better chance of being elected, which look and sound like our
18 voter base, young people. No generation has a monopoly on knowledge and power,
19 and the EGP commits to supporting candidates from the age of eligibility to run to
20 ensure diversity and inclusivity in public office. However, young people do not go to vote as
21 much as other age groups. The low representation of young people and their main concerns
22 make it unattractive to vote. In recent years, a few political parties have been successful in
23 addressing these issues, but are not bringing the ultimate progressive solutions young people
24 want. The Green movement has been fighting for many years for a better representation of the
25 population in our parliaments. And there are many good reasons to do this, one being that if
26 someone tells your story and they seem to understand you, because they are like you, you are
27 more likely to vote for them.~~

28
29 ~~The truth is, however, that politics is still often seen as a place where wise older people have to
30 take the difficult decisions. And while other, even highly conservative, parts of society,
31 including parts of Hollywood and corporate boards, are listening to public pressure and
32 becoming increasingly diverse, the political arena is lagging behind and continues to look
33 exactly the same.~~

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35 Although Green parties continue to have a higher concentration of younger people than most
36 other parties, the chances of them getting elected are often slim. Even within our own
37 progressive movement, we seem to find it difficult to put forward a Young Green.

1 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2014/post/post_2014_survey_analitical_overview_en.pdf

2 GroenLinks, with 30-year-old Jesse Klaver, would have been the second biggest party amongst under 25-year-olds, and the third under 35: <https://nos.nl/artikel/2163382-jong-of-oud-man-of-vrouw-wie-stemde-op-welke-partij.html>.

In the Czech Republic, the likelihood of young people voting Green is twice as high as for other parties:
<http://showme.median.cz/volby-2017/>

In the German federal elections in September 2017, Greens performed best among 18-24-year-old voters:
http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/bilder/uvchart-ydthzpcgmui-101~_v-videowebl.jpg

Among 18-29-year-old voters in Finland, the Greens are the most popular party with 30.9% and growing:
<https://tietoanurista.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Puoluekannatus-768x640.jpg>



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39 Looking at recent developments in electoral campaigns, we note a lack of renewal and
40 rejuvenation within parties. By not putting young people high on the list, more people will be re-
41 elected rather than newly elected, preventing more experienced politicians from passing on
42 their skills, knowledge and experience. Without fresh blood, political groups will stand still. And
43 without young people on the lists, young people are less likely to vote Green.

44
45 As the Green movement, we are a great school for young politicians. One of our considerable
46 strengths are the Green youth wings, where Young Greens can learn by doing. This is where
47 they can learn to make mistakes, feel free to make alliances with newly emerging progressive
48 movements, develop their own political views, and where they can gain experience in all
49 aspects of politics – writing policy papers, campaigning or winning Green political victories.
50 The Young Greens do it all and they do it well. Greens win elections because young people see
51 them as a movement they want to campaign and vote for³. For young people in particular, the
52 Young Greens are an important gateway for this.

53
54 If we want more young people to go out and vote, and in particular more young people to vote
55 for the Greens, we must represent youth properly. To achieve this, we need young people
56 higher on our lists, able to make a substantial contribution to campaigns, to gain even more
57 political experience and thus to be able to get elected. Autonomous youth wings are an
58 essential prerequisite for this.

59
60 Acknowledging the lack of representation of youth also raises the issue of political
61 representation in general. Young women, LGBTIQ youth and youth from other
62 underrepresented groups face multilayered structural discrimination which Green
63 parties and Green youth organisations must be equipped to tackle in order to ensure
64 diverse representation and sharing of power among youth as a whole. What's more, in
65 some countries, people hold multiple offices or multiple terms and this is a real
66 obstacle for renewal and for young people to get to political responsibilities.

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68 With reference to the above, the EGP and its member parties commit to:

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70 ● Supporting autonomous youth wings;
71 ● Giving youth-wing representatives the opportunity to represent the mother party
72 in external debates whose topics aim mainly at young people;
73 ● Keeping in mind the importance of renewal within Green parties, acknowledging age
74 is not an automatic right to leadership;
75 ● Encouraging young members to take positions of responsibility within the party,
76 and acknowledging the successes of young members already in these
77 roles~~Facilitating a smooth transition from the youth wing into positions of~~
78 ~~responsibility within the party;~~
79 ● Giving adequate space and resources to youth-wing representatives to enrich debates,
80 ~~and~~ develop themselves and stand in elections;

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In the recent successful Dutch campaign, young people joined the campaign both online and offline because they believed in the positive Green message.



- 81 | ● To take into account that young Greens are represented on panels at EGP
82 | events; and
83 | ● Lobbying for a common age of candidacy for European Parliament elections to
84 | be 18 in all member states. Striving to have young people in electable positions in all
85 | elections where list elections apply and
86 | ● • Strengthening our joint campaigns for votes at 16 for European Parliament
87 | elections across Europe.