

Brussels, 14 September 2018



Dear Friends,

The European elections in May 2019 will be different: an EU with one Member State less for the first time ever and a Grand Coalition of conservatives and social-democrats that will not have the majority anymore. For sure, anti-European forces will grow in the new European Parliament, but we should be careful to fall in the trap of making the campaign about being for or against the EU. If we follow that path, it seems as we can only defend the current EU. And we Greens, clearly being one of the most pro-European forces, are also at the forefront of the fight to change Europe. In the European Parliament and in the Member States, in national Parliaments and on the local level.

These elections, the Greens should bring the alternative narrative beyond the anti-European forces and the status quo parties. We are deeply convinced of the importance of international collaboration and multilateralism. The EU is a unique project, built after a dark period of divisions, fascism and communism. Since more than 60 years the European collaboration has brought us peace, prosperity, democracy and brother- and sisterhood. These values of the EU are so important to defend; certainly in current insecure times internationally. We need a strong Europe more than ever.

But this Europe is sometimes so difficult to love. This Europe failed in distributing wealth equally. This Europe failed for so many people during the Eurocrisis. This Europe failed in creating employment, especially for the young ones. This Europe failed miserably in protecting refugees fleeing for war and disarray. This Europe failed for too many people in keeping its promises.

We need to renew the promises of Europe. Nationalism is not the answer. Building walls and borders only divide us further. Inequality in our societies breeds fear and mistrust. We Greens stand for a united Europe, a social Europe, a fair Europe. We stand with the courageous movements in many countries: be it in Poland, Romania or Italy. It's in our Green DNA to be part of those defending democracy and freedoms. We are the only movement in Europe, pro-change and pro-EU.

In my 9 years in the European Parliament I have been working on greening our economy. Before my parliamentary life, I was a climate change researcher. For me it was totally logical to move to the European Parliament to fight for climate protection. In my first year, in 2009, that led to one of the biggest deceptions with the failure of the Copenhagen climate summit. We have come a long way since then: thanks to the Paris Agreement in 2015, climate change policies are again at the core of European policies. And it is thanks to the Greens that we have kept the ambition to an acceptable level despite the huge lobby pressure coming from the old industries. But important battles are still to come: greening our transport sector against the car lobby; greening agriculture against the big agro-industry; and pushing our green industrial agenda, where some tough decisions need to be shaped: how to have a fair phase-out of

coal, nuclear and gas. Change is possible. The technologies are there. Now we have to make sure the green transition will be fair and inclusive.

In those 9 years, I also moved more and more to economic policies, realizing how wrong the Eurocrisis is being handled by the centre parties. Austerity policies have deepened the crisis unnecessarily. The wrongly perceived attitude of debt and punishment have created a devastating economic situation in some of our European countries. Too long the EU has been a collaboration of Member States where solidarity is loosely defined, while maintaining the Euro and saving banks seemed to be the core task, leaving people paying the price with poverty and unemployment.

We can have a better Europe. A Europe that invests in the people. A Europe where trade and internal market are not a goal in itself but an instrument to create a social, clean and prosperous Europe where everyone can thrive. A Europe that taxes the polluters and pollutants and let multinationals pay its fair share. A Europe that cherishes its cultures and embraces diversity as a strength.

With great pride I have been part of recent electoral successes of GroenLinks, thanks to campaigns where we stuck to our own story. A story of change, a story of attacking tax haven Netherlands, a story against our obsession with austerity policies. And also a story of pride of an EU of tolerance and diversity. In the Netherlands we are now the biggest leftwing party because of that. I am convinced that the Greens have this potential in many more European countries. All together we can make Europe change. All together we can defend our European values and renew the promises of our European project. As Spitzenkandidat I will fight for that Europe; against the parties of status quo; and against the anti-European forces. Together we can have a Europe of positive change; change that is so needed in our beautiful Europe.

Bas

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Short CV

Bas Eickhout (1976, Groesbeek), is a Member of the European Parliament for GroenLinks, the Dutch Greens. He is a member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and a substitute member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Committee on Transport and Tourism. He is also a member of the Delegation for relations with the United States and a substitute member of the Delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China.

Eickhout studied Chemistry and Environmental Science at the Radboud University in Nijmegen and lives in Utrecht. Since 2000 he worked as a researcher at the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving). He worked on several projects which had to do with international environmental problems, such as climate change, agriculture, land-use and biofuels. He co-authored the IPCC report on climate change which received the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

He co-authored the GroenLinks election program for the European elections in 2004, 2009 and 2014, and the Dutch elections in 2010 and 2012.

Eickhout is the leading candidate for GroenLinks in the elections for the European Parliament in 2019.