

My vision for the Greens' Spitzenkandidat: Petra De Sutter

Europe is at a **crossroads**. If we let right-wing, populist Eurosceptics win next year's European elections, the current negative trend will become entrenched, further eroding the European project. We must continue defending both common European values, based on **human rights**, and the **social-environmental values** we Greens espouse. To achieve this, we must join forces. That is why I am putting myself forward for selection as the Greens' Spitzenkandidat for the 2019 elections.

Europe's Green family needs to speak up and speak out, now more than ever. We are the voice of **citizens** who want to be in the driving seat. They want innovative, sustainable answers to today's social and environmental challenges. The Green movement offers a **scientifically** responsible alternative, that also champions the **human** and **social** dimensions. It's what makes us unique. European Greens are clear that we want an open society, **inclusive** and **fair**. I want to keep working with you towards that goal.

Born in Belgium, one of the European project's founding fathers, I do all I can in politics to keep my country on a pro-European course. Europe has brought **peace, prosperity and well-being**. Europe's interests are the same as those of member states, though some would have us believe otherwise. Ongoing tension between the subsidiarity principle and the EU's powers combines with **design faults** in the EU decision-making process to make citizens feel uneasy. This tension is abused by populists to discredit the European project. We must give national parliaments a bigger role in our European project, provide the European Parliament with more legislative powers, and push for transnational electoral lists. Citizens must get more of a say on European policy. The EU institutions' appointments system must be open and **transparent**. Cronyism and decisions behind closed doors no longer cut it in 2018.

**I am optimistic**. Brexit, the threats from authoritarian regimes on all sides, and the fact that we may need to review our relationship with the US are all making many people realise we need a stronger Europe. The foundation stone for that Europe is protection of **human rights, democracy and the rule of law**. The Council of Europe has taught me to appreciate the importance of these principles. In these three areas Europe must be a beacon, a front-runner. Neither internal nor external assaults on these fundamental principles can be tolerated.

Europe's **social agenda** must be implemented, as a matter of urgency. We will only win people to the European cause again when they realise that Europe offers them safety and security. A European minimum income, a better parental leave framework, enhanced workers' rights, improved working conditions and anti-poverty measures are all high on our agenda. But we must also bring people round to recognising that Europe already benefits them, in employment and social affairs too. It's true that on taxation a lot still needs to be done. We're a long way yet from having a fair tax system, where large companies pay their share. As Greens, we must pursue this.

The **migration crisis** is essentially a political crisis. The European solidarity mechanism has failed to ensure geographical distribution of refugees; we are still waiting for the Dublin scheme re-design; human rights are still being breached. None of this is acceptable. As PACE's general rapporteur for refugee reception conditions, in July I visited Moria, on Lesbos, a hotspot camp. I saw for myself the degrading conditions in which refugees are confined there. Moria tarnishes Europe's image. No more of these hotspots can be tolerated. What we need is a holistic approach to migration. We must be **honest** in discussing the issues and work out legal and safe routes and humane reception of refugees. We must draw more attention to the benefits of migration and integration. Europe must also be consistent: what we give with one hand through development aid should not be taken away with the other through misaligned agricultural, fisheries and trade policies.

As a Green politician, I hardly need to say I support and promote **fair trade**, which respects social and labour rights, public health and the environment. Sustainable and environment-friendly measures to mitigate global warming, and a sustainable **agricultural policy**, which respects agricultural principles, are essential if our planet is not to be depleted and poisoned. As a scientist and a doctor, I do a lot of work on how the **environment influences our health**. Endocrine disrupting chemicals and particle dust are a threat to both present and future generations. They must be curbed.

As a fertility expert, I am very concerned about the **ethical dilemmas** that come with today's technological progress. In the last ten years, I have been engaged in scientific research and policy work on the ethical aspects of human reproduction, including surrogacy, donation of reproductive cells, genetic screening and embryo modification. **Commercialisation**, eugenics and exploitation of surrogate mothers and donors are new manifestations of unbridled neoliberalism, which has now extended its reach to the field of reproduction. I am also familiar with the issue of **genetically**

**modified agricultural crops.** We Greens believe in environmentally sound solutions to modern challenges, rather than betting everything on purely technological responses. The latter often only bring new problems. If we want to save the planet for future generations, we need a **radical environmental shift.**

Finally, **human rights.** As a transgender woman, I know what it's like to be part of a minority and discriminated against because of my **sexual orientation and my gender identity.** In my political work I advocate for all minorities, whatever the grounds of discrimination. Modern Europe is becoming increasingly **polarised** on ethical issues, with traditional values regaining ground. LGBT rights and the principle of **sexual and reproductive autonomy** are under pressure. As a gynaecologist, I work to ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights, from combating child marriages and genital mutilation, to promoting free access to contraception and safe abortion. In the Council of Europe, I have learned to handle extreme hostility aimed at who I am and what I do, and I am convinced we need more than ever to defend our rights and our freedom.

My friends, I am prepared to give my all for the European Greens' campaign, and work my way into new subjects. With rallies and debates all over Europe, but especially via a strong social media campaign (video spots, online debates), I hope to win over the European voter to our Green project. I am capable of putting across complicated issues to a wide audience in a way that makes them comprehensible. I care passionately about campaigning. But my overriding **passion** is for the Greens' project. I hope I can count on your support.