

## Hope in challenging times: Let's make a green future possible in the 2024 European elections

### **The 2024 European elections will be like no European elections held before.**

We only have a few years left to take and implement the right decisions to keep our planet liveable for humans, our air breathable, the water drinkable and accessible to all, and biodiversity protected. The terrible heatwaves, forest fires, droughts, and flooding of the last summer are the implacable results of wrong political choices with huge social and economic consequences for our societies and will only worsen in the near future if we do not change course immediately.

The European project and democracy itself are under constant threat. Autocracies are on the rise in the EU and elsewhere in Europe, and with them, attacks on rule of law and fundamental rights, not only the rights of women and LGBTQIA+, but equally those of civil society organisations, BIPOC, individual activists, homeless people, asylum seekers and refugees. Putin's brutal aggression against Ukraine has led to thousands of innocent people losing their lives and millions of people being forced to flee war. Fuelled by our economies' addiction to gas and oil, it constitutes the biggest threat to the fundamental values of our societies, and to peace in Europe.

The global energy and food crises are direct results of irresponsible and short-sighted political decisions. They increase the existing social injustices and fuel social anger by making the most vulnerable, those who contributed the least to these crises, suffer from them the most. While at the same time, those who are mainly responsible are not paying their share and are even profiting from it.

Our climate is in crisis, our democracies are at risk and social inequalities are growing.

Only a project that has always understood these dimensions together, only a project based on a rational, science-based and humanist diagnosis of the current crises while at the same time taking into account people's feelings and real anxieties regarding an uncertain future, can provide the right solutions.

This is exactly what our common green project is.

Greens emerged decades ago because we realised that our growth-based, fossils addicted, and unjust model would drive humankind into ruin. We needed to join political forces to counter these developments.

We have been listening to scientists, we knew that sooner or later we would be hit by a zoonosis paralyzing our lives. And then we were confronted by COVID 19.

We have been warning against monopolistic ties with Russian dictatorship and the risk for peace, security, and climate that our dependency on Russian gas was posing. And then the Russian army invaded Ukraine.

We have been reading what scientists told us, what the IPCC wrote in every single report, that climate change could be devastating and that numerous environmental damages are already irreversible.

And then during the European summers of 2021 and 2022 people lost their lives, their homes and livelihoods, and in so many places worldwide.

Nobody knew if, when, and how Putin would aggress Ukraine. Yet, as a European family, we always showed clarity in our stance against Putin's regime. Greens in all European countries had constantly warned against ties with the Russian dictator and the risk for peace, security, and climate that our dependency on Russian gas was posing. And as a matter of fact, we were united as European Greens in condemning Putin's aggression, calling for effective sanctions and in calling for supporting the Ukrainian resistance.

Nobody knew the exact level of catastrophe the 2022 summer will bring. Yet, because the scientists told us, because the IPCC wrote it in every single report, we knew that the summer could be devastating and that numerous environmental damages are already irreversible.

Greens stem from the peace and global justice movement. We are globally committed to human rights, peace, and social justice. We need to be aware of our colonial past and take responsibility for justice in this world. And we stand by our international responsibility and the Geneva Refugee Convention. Refugees are eligible for access to proper accommodation, care, and legal aid free of discrimination. We say it clear: Refugees are welcome here!

Together, as European Greens, we have a credible, fair, democratic and positive alternative to the devastation created by the deadly duel between the status quo and authoritarianism, a path towards a world where our planet's environmental boundaries are respected and where the social foundation is accessible to each and every one of us, a world where the climate crisis is tackled, biodiversity is preserved, clean air and healthy soils are a given, where our economies are sustainable, discrimination has vanished, and equal rights and high social protection are ensured.

We need a Europe that holds out hope for change in these difficult times. We built a European project based on the unwavering conviction that national governments alone cannot face the challenges of the century. Together as Europeans we are stronger in tackling these crises and we know that only a strong European democracy can protect the general interest.

### **We are ready.**

In 2019, the strength of the climate movement played a significant role in propelling the Greens to a successful result in the European elections.

The Green wave was a demonstration of an ongoing deep cultural change in the society, and particularly within youth, of a powerful citizens' will to see change happening and a source of hope, echoed in many following elections at local, regional, and national levels in Europe.

In the European Parliament, we have been punching above our weight in passing and implementing more ambitious legislation to tackle the biodiversity crisis and climate emergency, to fight corruption, in upholding social rights and wealth redistribution, in giving the EU more tools to protect fundamental rights and freedom of European citizens against autocrats.

In the eight national governments and in all the regions and cities with Greens in responsibility, Greens are already making a difference on the ground. They provide immediate solutions to people

who cannot afford to pay their bills, who need mobility options and who are facing precariousness and cannot participate fully in society. They have started to shape the future by investing in renewables, in green infrastructures, in public services, in innovative citizens' participative tools, in inclusive policies.

**But we know that for the necessary changes to happen, we need to go way beyond.**

The time where greens were visionary whistle-blowers, alerting, denouncing, warning against the impossibility of our economic model to be sustainable is long past.

**Time has come for the greens to be at the centre of new majorities in Europe.**

Time has come to build robust and long-term policies, to fight climate change, to protect biodiversity, to organize the energy, transport, and the agricultural transition not only in Europe but also in recognition of Europe's share of responsibility for tackling these issues globally.

Time has come to create a social Europe where all Europeans have access to properly financed public services, including health care and social protection, where no one is left behind, where everyone receives proper education, as well as affordable housing, where youth unemployment is ending and where redistribution is the driver of European fiscal and tax policy. A Europe that protects and upholds workers' rights.

Time has come to make way for the transition to a sustainable and fair economic system in Europe, that is independent from fossils and aims at creating a circular economy and good jobs with adequate wages.

Time has come to take the voices of the youth seriously, to bring youth to the decision-making table, and to grant them the right to vote from the age of 16. Young people will be the ones most affected by the decisions we make today, and they must be involved in taking those decisions.

Time has come to build a feminist, inclusive and anti-racist Europe, with reforms to protect fundamental rights and freedoms, equal rights for all, and to fight against all types of discrimination in all areas. A federal Europe capable of protecting and sharing its values at the global level, where rule of law and democracy are guaranteed, and where no European citizen's right can be threatened.

Time has come for the European Union to stand for global justice as well as to protect human rights and prevent conflicts worldwide. We are committed to the implementation of the Agenda 2030, a feminist foreign policy, as well as tackling post-colonial political structures.

**Time has come for the green project to stop being a project, to become a reality for all - and it is our responsibility to make that happen.**

The task ahead of us is not easy.

While many try to justify climate inaction because of the war in Ukraine, we know now is the time to double our efforts.

While some try to play off the most vulnerable people and the climate crisis, we know that the transition has to be just.

While others try to justify their inaction against autocrats because of both the climate and social

crisis, we know that the transition only works in democracies where everyone has a say.

While some want to shatter it, we want to enhance and improve the Green deal.

Together, we will fight the backlash on the Green transition and the backlash on fundamental rights. Together, our united answer to the insecurities of our time is hope instead of fear and solidarity instead of further division.

We will fight for a society where the ability of all of us, today and tomorrow, to lead a life of dignity and rights on a healthy planet will be ensured.

We know that those who will be in power in the years to come, in the most decisive moment for humanity, will get to decide whether we tackle the climate crisis, fight injustices, strengthen our common democracy, defend our rights and values, or whether we let a broken model destroy our social contract, our democratic model and ultimately our planet.

**That is why we take up our responsibility to reach out and convince as many people as possible of our ideas with unshakable determination.**

Towards 2024, we European Greens, in the most European campaign ever, want to show the way to the most powerful idea of this century: the possibility of a green future.

And to do so, we, the European Greens, aim to:

- Build stronger connections with civil society, citizens' movements, social partners, youth and seniors' organisations, scientific community, in respect of our respective roles, by involving them in a listening process at an early stage in view of the drafting of our Common Manifesto, which proposes green politics responding to both social and environmental problems;
- Open up to new thinking and connect further with partners, including in the business sector, in order to propose to European citizens, the most workable and credible plan to engage in the green transition, in constant dialogue with trade unions;
- Continue our work to open up to and welcome in our family and European Campaign new political forces who share our common green values, positions and democratic principles;
- Strengthen the European dimension of the European elections including by standing strongly behind the Leading Candidates process and the call for transnational lists, and by Europeanizing to the maximum extent the debate around the EU elections, especially in those countries where our presence is quite strong;
- Contribute to significantly raise the turnout to the European elections especially by focusing our campaign on first-time and young voters, as well as on awareness raising for EU citizens living abroad;
- Continue our intense cooperation with our partners from the Green Group in the European Parliament, the Federation of Young European Greens and the Green European Foundation;
- Continue to support the long-term perspectives and capacities of our member parties also beyond the European elections;



- Bring the European Green parties closer by fostering the dialogue further on our common vision and policies for the European Union, also by actively involving their representatives on all levels;
- Achieve the best result we ever achieved in European elections, with more MEPs from more countries, in order for Greens to be at the centre of future majorities in the next European Parliament and in the European Commission.