

Dear friends,

The European Union is probably the best idea that was ever had on this continent. It is under threat and it hasn't fulfilled its potential. But let's imagine what Europe can be: it can be the international frontrunner for climate protection and the environment, it can be the role model for social welfare and human rights, it can be a player for peace and fair globalization. It can be a champion of democracy and a safe haven for people in need. This is what Europe can be, what it was meant to be.

This image is, unfortunately, still far from reality. Austerity and closed ports is the new normal. While there are a lot of challenges from outside – Trump and Putin, to name just two – the main danger comes from within. Many parties, increasingly also those in governments, want to get rid of the European ideals. They want to go back to nationalism and closed borders, ignoring the dangerous lessons from history. If they get the upper hand, we might not longer have an EU. But they are not the only problem. The attitude of the status-quo parties is maybe even more dangerous. For years, they have been undermining the potential of Europe, keeping the benefits for a lucky few and pushing for their agenda of liberalization and austerity. With pressure from the right, center-parties now move themselves more and more to the right, abolishing the right to asylum and undermining civil liberties.

It takes a strong and clear voice to speak up against this shift to the right and for a progressive Europe. We Greens have a long record of fighting for a better Europe, often in difficult circumstances. We offer clear proposals and solutions to real problems. We stand our ground and are ready to work with allies. We defend Europe and we want to change it, so that it will fulfill its potential. This pro-European changemaker stance gives us a unique position in the political spectrum, one that has the potential to find lots of sympathy.

At the same time, we are a European-wide movement, reaching beyond EU borders. Being a European family makes us strong and makes us a player, even in countries where we're still struggling. We are also a party that is very close to movements and citizen's initiatives. While we can and need to do more with regard to this role, we have already been increasing our efforts in the past year and we can be an important voice for civil society in the European Parliament.

I grew up at the Polish-German border. Until recently, this border was a real obstacle between the two cities facing each other from two different countries. But with the East German and later the Polish accession to the European Union, the border became permeable, until it finally disappeared. Now, people walk across the border river without checks, there are no more lorry lines waiting for hours to cross, citizens initiatives and bilateral festivals are blooming. This is how I imagine Europe. Bridging borders, bringing people together and opening new perspectives for everyone. It is with this image in my head that I applied for a seat in the European Parliament in 2009, aged 27. Since then, I have been working on refugee policies, an issue that nowadays works as the denominator of where one stands on Europe as well as on human rights. I have also worked on development policies and trade, pushing for



Ska Keller

*22/11/1981 in GDR
Studied Islamic studies, Turkology
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Green member since 2002
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MEP since 2009
European lead candidate for EGP
in 2014

President of Greens/EFA in EP
since 2016

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coherent and fair policies that help achieve the sustainable development goals. I have further worked on the Eurocrisis, on solidarity, on the rule of law and many other issues. I have traveled almost all EU countries during my term. I strongly believe that it is our job as European parliamentarians to be parliamentarians for all Europeans, not just for one country or one region. As a European Green, I find it important to understand the discussions and sensitivities in Green parties all over the continent and not just at home.

Being the European lead candidate in 2014 was a big responsibility but also a fantastic experience for me. It was and still is amazing to meet so many Green volunteers all over Europe, who invest their time and energy for our common fight. It is them and the fabulous candidates that bring a campaign to life. Elections are won on the ground and that's exactly where I want to go.

The next elections will be tough, with the far-right on the rise, the center-right moving rightwards and the left being split over Europe. But we are not alone in fighting for a progressive Europe. People protest for nature reserves in Poland and Bulgaria; they go on the street against corruption in Romania and Slovakia, they stand up against austerity in Greece and Finland, they help refugees in Austria and Hungary and they march for the climate in Paris and Berlin. Other parties have been a disappointment to progressive voters because they're not clear on Europe, not living up to their promises, because they're incoherent and have little credibility and because they don't care about the big challenges of today. As Greens, we have much to offer, but we also need to listen to activists and like-minded people.

We need to stand united as a Green family, to learn from each other and support each other. We need to be clear on our position and ambitious in our proposals while at the same time showing that we're able and willing to make compromises and that we create majorities everyday in parliament.

We want to win this election. We want to win a strong green group in the European Parliament in order to make Europe greener. To make sure social Europe is more than an empty phrase, to save the planet, to transform the economy, to establish justice, to guarantee rights for all people, whether citizen or not, to be fair in the world and to bring meaning to a big word: solidarity.

This is what I want to fight for, together with you. Election campaigns are not the easiest time but they are my favorite. Because of the common spirit, because of the common energy and because we can change Europe.

I would be very grateful if you supported my candidacy to be lead candidate of the European Green Party in 2019.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ska Kelt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Ska