



Our European Union: ENGAGING FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND UNITED EUROPE

“Determined to lay the foundations of an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe, resolved to ensure the economic and social progress of their countries by common action to eliminate barriers which divide Europe, (...)”

Preamble of the Treaty of Rome, establishing the EEC, 1957

1. We need to change the course of the EU in order to make it live up to its promises to citizens. The next elections in 2019 represent a crucial step in the still undecided battle on the future of Europe. Greens intend to play a role in defining that: only those who are determined to have a truly democratic, ecologic and social EU can change it for the better.
2. Over the last two years, so-called Euroscepticism has peaked in quite a few Member States. The way in which the EU governments and institutions managed the economic and financial crisis over the last decade, Brexit, growing challenges to the rule of law and democracy in Poland and Hungary, systematic abuse of political power for private economic gains in Romania, Slovakia and Malta, the failure of the relocation of refugees, the marginal role in the bloody and intractable conflicts at our borders, the exposed inadequacy of EU policies and its functioning EU have contributed significantly to alienating many citizens. The lack of an imminent threat to its very existence does not mean that the EU is presently capable of dealing with citizens' expectations and needs. Member States are very divided over policies and objectives; reciprocal vetoes and an increasing deterioration in the authority of common institutions and rules affect the credibility of the EU as a space of rule of law, solidarity, economic transformation and investment. And the other traditionally pro-European parties lack the courage to mobilise and create convergences for European progress and stand up for them.
3. For European Greens, Europe is more than a free market or an institutional construction; our European democracy is based on those values arising from our common European history and a cultural heritage based on diversity. It represents the space where our objective to change the world and to make it ecologically and socially just and sustainable can be achieved on a sufficient scale. Democracy, solidarity, openness, freedom, tolerance, equality in diversity and respect for the rule of law cannot remain within national borders; nor can solutions to global challenges like climate change and migration. And mass unemployment, precariousness, rising xenophobia and inequality also need a common framework and explicit solidarity tools to be addressed at both the national and local level. Cruel conflicts and wars in areas at our immediate borders require a unified, effective EU foreign and cooperation policy – which can ease poverty and facilitate peace – as well as the close cooperation of intelligence and security services to prevent and counter terrorism. We are aware that to reach these goals we need to change the political direction and the way in which the EU functions, and to create an appetite and a consensus for such change. To this end, we want to engage with the following priorities:



DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL COHESION, RESPECTING DIVERSITY AND RULE OF LAW MUST REMAIN AT THE HEART OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT

4. **Among the basic criteria for joining the EU is respect of the rule of law and of human and political rights, press freedom, proper administration and a workable separation of powers, as well as the fight against corruption.** This has been one of the EU's most important achievements and a key asset for its credibility in the international arena. However, over the last few years, these aspects which we consider fundamental for the European identity have come under pressure; worse, the willingness and ability of the EU Member States to defend them within and outside the EU seem to have weakened substantially.
5. We consider that if the EU is to sustain support and legitimacy among its citizens, **it needs more effective instruments to secure our core principles and the rule of law within the EU;** an EU internal human rights strategy should help identify problems in this area in a structural, more streamlined way, to develop actions and organise a proper follow-up. To this end, European Greens consider that the EU must **accelerate its planned accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** and oppose attempts by national governments to undermine this Court. Furthermore, we must go beyond a procedure that simply foresees a very cumbersome and virtually inapplicable procedure of vote suspension (art.7): we need a binding and comprehensive mechanism to regularly monitor the state of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in all EU Member States, as well as a system of political dialogue and swift intervention in case of a violation of art. 2, support measures by civil society and, if necessary, adequate sanctions.
6. In addition, we need a European Values Instrument as a positive incentive to support civil society organisations which promote fundamental values within the EU at both the local and national level. It must be possible to sanction those Member States which are at risk of seriously breaching the values outlined in art. 2. of the EU Treaties. Such sanctions could concern the control of EU funds; the possibility of paying directly to final beneficiaries should be envisaged.
7. **The scope of the Charter of Fundamental Rights is too narrow and its capacity to effectively defend individual citizens and residents is very limited.** European Greens consider the European Charter of Fundamental Rights must be directly applicable in all areas and in all Member States; access to the Court of Justice for legal and natural persons directly affected by a violation of an EU Member State or EU institution must be ensured.
8. **The right to live in peace and to enjoy decent living conditions is not only for European citizens;** in recent years, national policies on migration and asylum have frequently violated international obligations, were unable to prevent the deaths of thousands of migrants at sea or to alleviate their unacceptable conditions outside the EU and, often, within the EU. Moreover, the unsatisfactory implementation of EU decisions on relocating refugees has provoked bitter resentment and further divisions among EU countries. The enormous disproportion between resources and efforts allocated to keeping migrants as well as refugees outside our borders, in contrast to those assigned to positive policies of integration and poverty alleviation, has failed to ensure the safety and well-being of both migrants and less-fortunate EU citizens within the



EU. Our demands for greater legal protection of refugees and migrants also aim to allow for better legal and police action against their exploitation.

9. **The current EU Treaties and legislation must be addressed to enable the establishment of a genuine legal migration system, because the current framework does not** provide sufficient space and competence for a common, balanced approach to this increasingly controversial issue. Harmonised EU asylum policies should grant access to effective protection for refugees and asylum seekers within the European Union, and shall include both a permanent, binding and fair mechanism of relocation within the EU through the reform of the existing Dublin Regulation, and resettlement and humanitarian visa opportunities for refugees in third countries who are fleeing their countries of origin. A common EU migration policy should offer migrants realistic and flexible opportunities for family reunification and access to the labour market, including in the low- and medium-wage sectors.
10. **The EU migration system must be in synergy with, but not conditional to its policies on foreign affairs and development cooperation. Development cooperation policy should aim first and foremost, to eradicate poverty, while migration and asylum policies should provide adequate and harmonised procedures, both for refugees and for migrants.** The European Parliament must be able to exert democratic scrutiny on the implementation of border controls, both formal and informal agreements with third countries (including cooperation on readmission and return), asylum and migration policies; safeguarding national security cannot be used as a pretext for stopping European action.
11. Some Member States which have signed up to Schengen have introduced temporary border controls which are at risk of becoming permanent. We propose that these plans should include clear and limited timescales for implementation.

A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY AT EU LEVEL IS KEY FOR CITIZENS

12. Citizens must be able to see that they can determine decisions taken at the EU level. The EU institutional framework must develop further into a supranational democracy in which public decisions are taken in a transparent way by elected and politically accountable representatives, not compromised by conflict of interests or abusive lobbying activities: an EU that is able to deliver and is accessible to its citizens.
13. **Indispensable conditions to reach this goal are to reverse the current trend in renationalising EU competences, marginalising the EP, and to make sure that important reforms towards more solidarity and integration are not blocked by a minority in the Council.** Conditions must be created to overcome the unanimity vote by resorting systematically to the normal legislative procedure and a simplified enhanced cooperation procedure. The EP must have the power to initiate legislation and to fully exert its co-decision and scrutiny rights in all areas, notably on issues of economic governance, migration, environmental, tax, budget, foreign policy and security issues.
14. Furthermore, **positions defended by Member State representatives in the Council must be made public** so that the citizens, media and civil society know what position their government has taken on their behalf at the EU level, and to enable national



parliaments to enhance their scrutiny of EU decision-making.

15. **European Greens welcomed the European Citizens Initiative introduced by the Lisbon Treaty:** however, its promise of a formalised and direct participation in the decision-making process has never materialised satisfactorily, due to bureaucratic hurdles, administrative burdens and poor political reaction from the European Commission. European Greens intend to play an active role in the forthcoming review of the ECI regulation **to ensure that procedures are simplified, that it is possible for citizens to propose a reform of the Treaties and that a real political follow-up is accorded to those ECIs securing a million signatures.**

THE GREEN TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY, WITH SUSTAINABILITY AND JUST TRANSITION AT ITS CORE, NEEDS A EUROPEAN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND FISCAL UNION, AND ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

16. The EU must reorientate its actions and resources towards sustainability, green jobs, social justice and sustainable public finances. The Green New Deal and a carbon assessment of EU budgets should also be part of the new paradigm. The EU must be enabled to take decisions in this direction, steering away from the inconclusive summits and empty consensus on ineffective measures.
17. **European Greens strive for a green European investment strategy and green industrial policy,** promoting resource and energy efficiency, the digitalisation of industry and new industrial production technologies, whilst also safeguarding social justice. The EU should be given the tools and resources to finally meet its responsibility to tackle the global climate crisis and fossil-fuel addiction, focusing on a circular economy and digitisation which would benefit everyone and ensure a just transition. We want a Common Agricultural Policy linked to ecological criteria and strict ecological and social standards for products and resources brought to the European market.
18. **Climate change is one of the key global challenges facing the EU and the world.** Today, the EU is not in line with the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and the adaptation of its binding EU climate targets and actions. We need to organise and enhance tools, policies and resources to establish a genuine Energy Union. European Greens support the need for a common energy policy based on the development of renewable energies and energy efficiency to be incorporated into the Treaties as a prime objective for both the Union and the Member States. European Greens also support the reform of the Gas Directive.
19. **A substantially more ambitious EU budget is needed, funded increasingly by own resources co-decided by the European Parliament,** enabling partial relief at the level of Member States' contributions, and substantially enhancing EU budgetary capacity. The budget must also be complemented through project bonds to finance projects of general interest, such as a pan-European renewable energy infrastructure and to support structural 'green' changes.

20. The social pillar should be developed. For greater social justice we want the strong



coordination of national minimum income schemes and minimum wages and EU action against employers who dump wages. In this way it is possible to redirect the benefits from the economic recovery to those whose labour made it possible. This is without prejudice to national collective bargaining practices.

21. To this end, a comprehensive European tax strategy is required. An EU-wide consolidated corporate tax and financial transaction tax must be established. Indeed, an EU tax strategy to finance sustainable policies would enhance the feeling of belonging to the EU, by improving European citizens' living conditions, pushing corporations to contribute to the general interest, preventing social dumping, tax avoidance and evasion, and unfair tax competition between Member States. Tools supported by an enhanced budget could also include a common unemployment reinsurance scheme to take the strain off national schemes in a crisis. Such tools, as well as Eurobonds supporting future-oriented and sustainable investments should be conditioned to social and economic criteria overcoming the current austerity parameters. Significant progress must also be achieved in the fields of carbon tax, taxation of natural resource use, and pollution and corporate taxation, as well as the fight against tax fraud and evasion. Indeed, transition to a carbon-free economy would be greatly facilitated by a carbon tax, to ensure the necessary changes in production models, to avoid carbon leakages and to enhance EU budget capacity.

EUROZONE REFORM: FOR A FUNCTIONING EUROPEAN MONETARY AND ECONOMIC UNION

22. After Brexit, the eurozone will represent 85% of the EU-27 GDP and 340 million citizens. All but two of the remaining Member States which have not yet joined the single currency are due to join the eurozone. Our proposals for the future of the EMU apply to the eurozone+: countries which have already adopted the euro as well as those that are obliged to do so in future. An EMU 'à la carte' is not an option.
23. **Important political and institutional changes are necessary** to make wealth redistribution possible and the monetary union work for all, to better fight social and economic injustices, to invest in ecological transition, education, public services, to fund civil society organisations, to ensure that digital corporations effectively pay taxes, to guarantee minimum convergence of social standards and to ensure that this is done democratically.
24. **European Greens are convinced that the eurozone must have a fiscal capacity which is also open to non-eurozone Member States**; its members must be able to resort to coordination and solidarity mechanisms both for avoiding crises and for mitigating their effects. On the other hand, we oppose the creation of new 'eurozone-members-only' institutions: The Commission, Parliament and the Court of Justice are EU institutions and cannot be subdivided or replicated, although we support the establishment of a special committee for the eurozone inside the EP. The volume of this budget should be sufficient to create stability against asymmetric shocks and to allow for convergence through investments.
25. **Economic governance rules must be modified to make the social and environmental objectives agreed at the EU level and in relation to international commitments**



(Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Paris Agreement) more binding. This means putting them on an equal footing with the budgetary targets of the Stability and Growth Pact. On the other hand, this Pact must be complemented by an 'EMU sustainability and prosperity pact'. This text should define social, economic and environmental multiannual targets on the basis of indicators beyond merely GDP for EMU and its Member States.

26. **Economic and fiscal policy set at the European level must be co-decided by the EP** and take into account the view of social partners. To do so, the intergovernmental structures of the eurozone, such as the European Stability Mechanism, must be profoundly reformed and become fully accountable to the EP. In addition, the Eurogroup must become an ordinary body of the Council of Ministers. This includes the adoption of proper rules of procedure, the publication of minutes, results and explanations of votes; its deliberations should be made public.
27. To address the persistent threat to EMU stability posed by systemic banks, **banking activities crucial to the real economy must be strictly separated from trading-related activities.** The Banking Union must be completed with a workable EU deposit insurance scheme. And a fund to act as a common fiscal backstop must be established to ensure that if the Banking Union fails to contain losses, **there is a buffer to avoid disorderly recourse to taxpayers' money.** As last-resort cases where public assistance would still have to be provided for the banks, a mechanism should ensure the temporary public ownership of those banks corresponding to the level of the public funds injected in them.
28. **It is essential to give the new mechanisms adequate financial muscle.** The ECB statutes must be revised to allow it to act as a last-resort lender for Member States and provide temporary relief from crises in government bond markets, thereby buying time for an orderly response.

THE EU'S ROLE IN A TROUBLED WORLD

29. **Deeper and better cooperation in foreign security and defence policy is needed to support, when appropriate, a common foreign policy oriented to maintain peace and enhance human rights.** It is important that if defence cooperation increases both at the EU level and among its Member States, parliamentary oversight is also reinforced, at both the national and European level, as well as a common European position on arms control, including sanctions for those Member States that circumvent the rules of the common export regime.
30. **Greens want to significantly strengthen civilian crisis management, civilian conflict-prevention instruments and budgets** to redress the imbalance between low EU commitments regarding civilian approaches and, on the other hand, fast-growing defence initiatives such as CBSD (Capacity Building in support of Security and Development) and the European Defence Fund. The relevant financial allocations and regulatory structures in the next EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027 should send a clear message that the EU is being strengthened as a civilian power. For us, this means a reinforced and purely civilian Instrument for Stability and Peace (IcSP) with a budget for civilian conflict prevention.



31. Greens want the EU to take the lead as a global actor with the aim of building and preserving peace, safeguarding human rights and pushing forward the SDGs. This also involves a special responsibility to help our neighbouring regions in Africa and the Middle East to cope economically and to provide better livelihoods and safety, to prevent welfare gaps widening and forced migration.

MULTIPLE SPEEDS, ONE DIRECTION: THE PATH TO AN EVER-CLOSER UNION

32. In recent months, several proposals have been presented by the EP, the Commission, national governments, think-tanks and civil society organisations to deal with the thorny and urgent issue of 'reforming' the EU. However, they have all been confronted with the fact that any relevant reform, no matter whether it is comprehensive or partial, needs to be adopted by consensus in negotiations behind closed doors among national governments and through a process which currently marginalises directly elected representatives at all levels and excludes civil society.
33. In the same way, the increasing difficulty to find common ground and an interest to act together among EU governments, even on issues which are of direct EU competence, is one of the main reasons why there is little or no progress in most of the areas where citizens expect the EU to act: tax justice and fiscal policy; climate; investments and employment; migration; budgetary issues; respect of human rights and rule of law within the EU; security and the fight against terrorism. **Discussions on the possibility of organising different speeds of integration within the EU stems directly from the need to overcome these multiple impasses.**
34. European Greens are convinced of the importance of keeping the EU together in the same institutional framework and of the possibility of improving the current procedure of enhanced cooperation, whilst strengthening the role of the EP and preserving the role of the Commission and the Court of Justice.
35. **But this will not be enough:** the inability to deliver on the long-promised financial transaction tax can serve as an example of the need to address current divisions concerning the goal and nature of EU integration. Such a choice should not be based on current membership of the eurozone, or on the readiness to be submitted to strict financial and economic stability criteria, but on the explicit willingness to share sovereignty and resources in matters of common interest through common institutions, community decision-making and on the commitment to 'an ever-closer Union'.
36. This process will not succeed if it is left in the hands of national governments alone. In this respect, we welcome recent efforts, notably by President Macron, to organise public debates and consultations on the challenges facing the EU, although we deplore that they do not seem directed at involving citizens concretely in defining the future of the EU. They risk remaining as 'talking shops', since in their current mandate it is explicitly excluded that they represent a step in the possible reform process, which is intended to remain strictly in governments' hands.



37. **Instead, European Greens are convinced that any deepening of integration** must be accompanied by a radical change in priorities and resources towards policies aimed at creating quality jobs and adequate social protection, and at sharing the responsibility towards migrants and refugees; as well as giving citizens and their representatives a greater role, at both the national and European level and in overcoming national vetoes in shaping the EU's future.
38. The procedure to change the Treaty must be profoundly altered: no more intergovernmental conferences behind closed doors, being forced to reach a unanimous consensus. Rather, we support the convening of a parliamentary Convention open to contributions from civil society, or an elected Constituent Assembly, convened on the basis of a mandate co-decided by the EP and representatives of the Member States acting by qualified majority. The final decision should be taken by the double majority of EU citizens through an EU-wide referendum and an enhanced majority of Member-State governments.
39. As Greens, we support a truly federal option for the EU. We believe that federalism is the right way to ensure that regional and national specificities are represented on an equal footing concerning the EU's general interest. For this reason, we call for a bicameral parliamentary system in which the EP, representing EU citizens as a whole and elected on transnational lists, will legislate beside a European senate representing national and/or regional interests.
40. Brexit negotiations **should aim to keep the closest possible ties between the United Kingdom and the EU**. Furthermore, the EGP calls on all EU institutions to ensure that there will not be a return to a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as a result of the Brexit negotiations with the UK; and it supports, if necessary, the granting of a special status within the single market to Northern Ireland. In the UK, young people voted overwhelmingly in favour of remaining in the EU and there is a growing consensus among today's youth across Europe for the EU to play a more active role. The EGP also calls on EU institutions to design and implement solutions, including reciprocal arrangements, which will allow mobility for young UK citizens.
41. The future of Europe must be more sustainable, democratic and united and the Greens will do everything they can to ensure this is played out in the upcoming 2019 elections.