



**Federation of Young European
Greens**

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Young Green Manifesto:

A GREEN EUROPE OR NO EUROPE

The year 2009 will give us a new opportunity to shape Europe. The European Union was founded as a project of peace, yet grew to become a not very democratic safe heaven for the free market. Many promises and hopes have remained unfulfilled: Despite the EU's professed commitment to upholding fundamental rights, discrimination and racism still abound on its soil. Migration policies have become shockingly harsh and gender equality is still far from a reality. Moreover, at a time the world expects Europe to take its responsibility in the fight against climate change, the EU takes only halfhearted measures to avoid this pending disaster.

Today Europe is in danger of losing its democratic legitimacy. The Lisbon -treaty will not do much to remedy this, as the progress it offers in terms of improving democracy and accountability is only minimal. Therefore, we, Young European Greens, believe that many additional changes are needed to restore faith in the idea of Europe as a project of the citizens. In order to achieve that the EU must advance wellbeing of people and animals within and outside of its borders.

We strongly believe that the Greens are the political party that can best transform Europe into a true project of peace and justice. Therefore, we will give them our full trust in 2009. For us, it is a Green Europe or No Europe!

The following five points are our priorities for greening Europe and the 2009 elections:

1. FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FIRST

The enlargement of the EU has unveiled the extent of a grave European fundamental rights problem. The ongoing discriminatory practices particularly towards Roma people force us to re-think our approach to fighting discrimination. Whereas anti-discrimination legislation is in place in most of the member states, affirmative action and measures to stimulate participation and combat social segregation are often lacking. Giving people equal opportunities is not only about anti-discrimination: it requires sustained efforts to promote participation and profound changes of mentalities.

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Another dark spot on the EU's fundamental rights record is the bad treatment and legal discrimination of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender people throughout Europe. Legal barriers to same-sex marriage and adoption by same-sex couples should be removed. The organization of pride parades should be recognized as a fundamental civil liberty. Furthermore, we strongly believe that the struggle against homophobia necessitates a general redefinition of the concept and role of gender in our society.

This struggle is therefore deeply connected to the fight for gender equality. Unfortunately, women in the EU remain in a disadvantaged position in many areas. The lack of women in higher-rank positions as well as the underrepresentation of women in politics are sad features of today's society. We demand that efforts to combat this injustice are doubled, notably by enhancing access to affordable child care. Furthermore, we are convinced that gender equality requires the full implementation of sexual and reproductive health rights. Therefore we demand an urgent improvement of sexuality education throughout Europe.

The so called war on terrorism has not only poisoned international relations and polarized societies, but has also undermined the protection of fundamental rights in Europe and abroad. Renditions, uncontrolled data transfer of airline passengers and the curtailing of basic civil liberties are all being justified by the inflated threat of terrorism. It is intolerable that our freedom is being diminished in the name of upholding it and we demand the immediate abolishment of all anti-terrorist measures that violate our fundamental rights.

The phantom War on Terrorism has had a very real spin-off effect, for it has triggered a War on Tolerance. Islamophobia has become an every-day reality for many Muslims in the European Union and religion has suddenly become a determining factor in people's public identity. We strongly reject such simplistic reasoning and we refuse to categorize anyone according to their religion. Furthermore, we believe that the current polarization should not infringe upon the right to freedom of expression, which should however always be exercised with responsibility.

2. GREEN ENERGY

We all know that if the earth continues to warm up, irreparable damage will be done to the planet. Green Energy should be considered more than just a complementary source of energy. Instead of playing ostrich politics and sticking their head in sand politicians can and must legislate immediate and binding measures and an uncompromising commitment to avoid further climate change.

We are affronted by the shameless Green-washing that is in fashion these days: under the cover of the fight against climate change, it is not only being attempted to launch a nuclear renaissance, but also to promote the use of `so-called biofuels, with all the destructive consequences this brings at an environmental and socio-environmental level. The promotion of such false solutions is distracting attention from what is really needed: energy efficiency measures, the reduction of energy consumption and the promotion of renewables.

Green energy is the energy of the future. For us, it is more than just windmills and solar panels: Green energy is also a symbol of hope for overall renewal. It forces us to re-think our life and consumption patterns and to change our modes of mobility. We want free public transport throughout Europe, high-speed affordable train-connections to unite us and bike and skate friendly cities. We want to be empowered by Green energy!

3. UNITING AND OPENING EUROPE

Fortress Europe is being fortified at a frightening pace. An inhumane expulsion and detention machinery has been put in place that locks up children and tears families apart. Unnecessary rigid migration policies have created an underclass of inhabitants who are deemed to be 'illegal'. We don't want to live on an island that is isolated from the rest of the world. We want an open Europe, where citizenship is being extended to all its inhabitants and where people and ideas can flow freely. We strongly believe that migration is highly beneficial to our societies.

The absurd practice of visa regimes should be ended as soon as possible, especially for youth from neighboring countries in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Eastern-Europe. We feel that the European Union has created an artificial division on the European continent that should be overcome. Therefore, we demand unlimited entry and access to educational and exchange programmes for all inhabitants of the European continent. We strongly believe that the EU should quickly include all willing Balkan countries and Turkey as member states.

Both the EU's structure and functioning reflect the prevalence of a market-driven economic model which has largely failed to address the problem of growing inequalities within and between member states. The discrepancy between the tough regulation of economic and financial sectors and the soft regulatory mechanisms pertaining to social policy issues has contributed to the widening of the gap between neoliberal and more egalitarian social models.

The only way to safeguard the vision of a united, social and sustainable Europe is through the reform of unjust European policy regimes such as the Common Agricultural Policy and the harmonization of members states' social policy regimes, leading to a race to the top, instead of the bottom. Essential public services must be protected from privatization, especially in the field of health care. Furthermore, social policies should promote intergenerational justice, requiring sustainable pensions systems without forcing people to work till they are about to die.

4. GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

As Europe's economic wealth is partly based on the exploitation of other parts of the world, Europe has a special responsibility to combat poverty and war outside its borders. EU member states must fulfill their commitment to spend 0.7% of their GDP for official development aid. This along with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is just a first step to fulfill Europe's responsibility. However, development policies should not serve to deflect attention from the structures that lie at the root of the unequal division of power and wealth in the world. Global economic, social and environmental justice is only possible if we reform our patterns of production and consumption and our trade policies.

At the same time, we insist that more regulation of the economy is needed at the international level. Therefore, we want the EU to push for a reformed WTO, allowing for participatory, equitable and sustainable development and promoting high environmental and social standards, the introduction of the Tobin tax and a binding human rights treaty for multinational enterprises.



Europe can only promote peace in other parts of the world if it makes its economic interests subordinate to its efforts to establish peace, strengthens the human rights dimension of its foreign policies and becomes a purely civil power. We strongly condemn the heavy emphasis on military solutions in the European Security Strategy and we demand large-scale investment in crisis prevention and civilian crisis-management. We also demand the end to all arms production in Europe, and urge Europe to take the lead in the adoption of a Global Arms Trade Treaty and a ban on nuclear and depleted uranium weapons.

We believe that the EU can make a difference in the rest of the world. However, it can only do so if it acts united and consistent. Therefore, we call for resistance to all attempts to divide this continent, for example by the unilateral placement of missile defense shields. Furthermore, as combating poverty and promoting peace are first and foremost grassroots processes, we demand that the EU abandons a top-down approach in external relations and fine-tunes its policies to the demands of local communities.

5. PARTICIPATION FOR ALL

The EU should be a project for its inhabitants, by its inhabitants. By enabling larger citizen participation the EU can become more accountable and therefore legitimate. The Lisbon treaty should be put to a European-wide referendum and the powers of the European parliament must be drastically strengthened.

As Young European Greens, we want to underline the importance of the inclusion of young people in European politics. There can be no democracy without youth participation in decision-making procedures. Therefore, a special statute should be created for European Youth Political parties and they should be entitled to guaranteed sources of Community funding. We also demand special measures for promoting and supporting young candidates. A European Parliament that does not have sufficient young MEPs can not properly represent our needs.

Full youth participation in all spheres of society is predicated upon good and affordable educational systems that equally value formal and non-formal education and are based upon the principles of diversity and inter-culturality. Cultural openness should also be stimulated by drastically expanding exchange possibilities for non-university educated youth. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that without granting young people access to affordable housing or tackling the problem of youth employment, youth participation policy will remain an empty vessel.

A Green Europe or No Europe

Whether we like it or not, we are united under the umbrella of the European Union. What this umbrella looks like, is partly in your hands. Europe and the EU are projects under construction: they are what we make of them. For us the choice is clear: we believe that the Greens can best accomplish the radical changes that are needed to make this project valid.