

Renewing the promise of Europe



Preamble
Election manifesto 2019



BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN
Platz vor dem Neuen Tor 1
10115 Berlin
Tel: 030 28442-0
Fax: 030 28442-210
E-Mail: info@gruene.de
Web: www.gruene.de

Donations account:
IBAN: DE73 4306 0967 8035 8159 00
BIC/Swift: GENODEM1GLSGLS-Bank

PREAMBLE

Dear voters,

The 2019 European elections will decide the course that Europe will take. Will our continent revert to nationalism? Will politics surrender to the challenges of globalisation and make the many crises it grapples with even worse? Or will the European Union find the strength to establish a new purpose? We are convinced that only a Europe with the power to act can solve the big issues facing us. This is why we must renew the promise of Europe.

Peace and freedom, democracy and the rule of law, social equity, equal opportunities and the upholding of our livelihoods – this is the promise of the European Union. It is a promise worth fighting for. In our shared Europe, we have created a space in which citizens can make their voices heard; where parliaments, not armies, call the shots and all people are equal in the eyes of the law.

But Europe and its people are facing challenges the likes of which have not been witnessed for years. Its foundations are being shaken, international order is disintegrating and European unity is under threat.

The UK wishes to leave the Union, marking the first exit of a member state in the history of the EU. In Italy – one of the founding members – fascists govern shoulder-to-shoulder with anti-Europeans. In Austria, the right-wing nationalist Minister of the Interior is setting about curbing the freedom of the press. In Romania, Poland and Hungary, the authoritarian governments are hollowing out the democratic state of law and attacking a person's right to determine his or her sexual orientation. The transatlantic alliance, once the guarantor of our security, is hanging by a thread, because the USA is being run by a right-wing populist who no longer pays heed to international law and views Europe as an economic opponent. Meanwhile, people are fleeing war, persecution and hunger, our planet is heating up at an alarming rate and diversity and equal opportunities are coming under attack. For many, work offers little chance of escaping poverty and inequality within and amongst the European member states is growing. Globalisation and digitisation radically alter the way we live, think and work.

Faced with such uncertainty, many people look for something to hang on to. Nationalists and anti-European welcome this uncertainty,

as fear is what drives their brand of politics. Their reaction to the complex challenges of a global world is to provide snake oil alternatives, which promise “quick fixes” but actually only make problems worse.

Yet populism also feeds on the impotence, selfishness and timidity of the European governments – including Germany. They reduce democracy to solving small problems whilst allowing the globalised economy to reign supreme. This essentially neoliberal approach does not offer an answer to the situation in which people find themselves and it intensifies their fears.

This is the spiral of fear from which we must escape. For only if we dare to act can we give the politicians back their clout and make the case for Europe based on the idea of sharing. For us, Europe means more sovereignty. Cutting ourselves off and becoming wrapped up in national concerns is not a solution in a globalised world. On the contrary, what a democratic and united Europe offers is the necessary framework in which citizens can answer the questions of the future as they see fit. We invite you to use your vote to play a part in this process. In this programme, you can learn about our ideas for an ecological, social and democratic European answer guided by the principles of gender equality. Here’s our call to you: join forces with us now for progress in Europe.

New European answers

So what if just one country wants a fair tax system, in which the big coffee chains pay just as much tax as the baker on the corner. To date, companies have been laughing all the way to the bank, diverting their profits from country to country, until they were paying practically no taxes anymore. So what if just one country wants to regulate digital capitalism. So far, internet giants have lost little sleep over this. 5, 15 or even 50 million fewer users are all the same to them. But what about the whole of Europe? It is far too big for them to do without. We’ve seen it with the new data protection regulation – it has practically become a global benchmark, because the European Union agreed it unanimously.

The power of multinationals and unfair dumping competitions for which small business owners, workers and consumers pay the price can only be curbed through supranational governance. The first step towards a corporate tax in the European Union could be a common one between Germany and France, just like a European minimum

wage directive and an extension of the European banking union. This would put the brakes on global companies and investors, thus protecting Europe against crises.

Poverty in Europe is on the rise and unemployment remains at a shockingly high level, especially amongst young people in southern Europe. Protecting against wage dumping, providing people with quality education and giving them the possibility of doing the kind of work that enables them to lead their lives on their terms are the foundations of a society guided by the principles of solidarity. We are standing up for an inclusive Europe which is about fairness and mutual recognition on an equal footing.

We can only avert the threat of a warm age brought about by the climate crisis by joining forces on a global scale, and here, Europe can make a real difference. This is why the EU must fulfil its responsibility and finally establish climate goals which are in line with the Paris Agreement. We want the EU to once again play a leading role in combatting climate change by joining forces in Europe to guarantee a safe energy supply from renewable sources instead of coal, gas and nuclear power. We can do this by, for example, linking up the Spanish and Greek solar farms, the Danish offshore windfarms, the German windfarms and the Austrian hydroelectric power plants.

If we want to make progress on climate protection, if we want to create new jobs, if we want our farmers to still be enjoying fertile soil in the future, then we need a sea change in European politics. An effective price must be imposed on CO₂. We need a new agricultural policy in Europe, an alternative to the “up or out!” principle. Climate protection, animal protection and water protection only work if one country doesn't undercut another one's standards. We can only combat the flood of plastic by calling time on disposable plastic.

The future of Europe is digital. We want to shape digital change in a way that benefits all people. Here, democratic regulation and technical innovation are key. European digital policy should be guided by human rights and be based on the principles of openness and sustainability. This is how Europe can become the counterpoint to the digital efforts of China and the USA.

In a changing world order, Europe is increasingly called upon to show its worth – as a foreign policy player, for whom human beings, with their dignity and freedom and inalienable rights, are its focus. In accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is Europe's responsibility to promote a just world order and, in the interest of global justice, eliminate anything in its

own policies which might contradict this. In order also to preserve the dignity of the individual for those people who seek shelter in Europe, an asylum system founded on the principle of solidarity must be introduced, which ensures a greater sense of humanity and provides us with more clout.

Even in the European Union, there are member states in which authoritarian structures are gaining an ever-stronger foothold. Civil societies in these countries need European support when they fight in the name of democracy and human rights. This is why we want to make it possible for fundamental rights also to be enforceable in the European member states. When corrupt and undemocratic governments violate EU law, they should no longer receive European funds. Instead, the latter should be sent directly to the local authorities and thus to the people.

Europe can do it, if we, its citizens, want it to.

The answer to Europe's challenges is Europe. The European Union can strengthen people's trust in its democratic institutions. It can combat the climate crisis. It can do its bit towards ensuring that the might of the law is what prevails and not the rights of the mighty. It can let freedom, equality and humanity keep their glorious promise. The European Union can preserve peace. It can. If we, its citizens, want it to. It's in this spirit that we must turn our hand to solving existing crises in Europe, like the climate and financial crisis or the lack of solidarity when it comes to welcoming refugees. After all, in the final analysis, these can also be traced back to structural decision-making deficits at European level.

Europe's crises are also the consequence of a lack of democracy at European level and the failure to make good on the promise of a socially just Europe. This is why it will be essential for Europe to continue to develop as a transnational democracy and a democratic union of citizens. This includes cross-border opinion making and genuine parliamentary, audit and budget rights as well as the right of initiative. This way, trust in European institutions will strengthen once more.

And this is what the European elections are all about: namely, deciding what we want and how we wish to live our lives together. And then, rolling up our sleeves and doing something about it. Europe didn't come into being by accident or mistake. It overcame the dreadful wounds of war because there were men and women who

showed vision, courage and resolve. The European idea is one of the most valuable that this continent ever created. Friendships and partnerships blossomed between states that once were enemies. We are united by the shared story, with all its scars and all its cultural wealth. For over 70 years, the EU has been a guarantor for peace and the surmounting of that which divides us. It was and it remains the guarantor of wealth, the protection of fundamental rights and high standards in our day-to-day lives.

But it is obvious how difficult it has become for the European Union to speak with one voice, because individual member states regularly prevent it from pursuing a common political line. That's why European states need to show courage and find in favour of majority decisions wherever this gives the EU community more clout. Or they ought to push for closer cooperation with individual states. At the same time, it also makes sense for countries like Germany and France to work shoulder to shoulder. They need to kick-start the ideas process together without falling into the traps of the past and putting up the old walls. After all, a Europe in which only a core makes progress, continuously leaving others behind, will end up hollowed out. But if stepping up the level of cooperation offers new solutions, demonstrating in the process that things are going okay, even well, the hesitant might find it easier to sign up to the whole deal and the EU as a whole will be the stronger for it. This way, a new promise can emanate from Europe.

BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN are standing to trigger the changes we need in European politics to bring about more sustainability, solidarity and humanity and ensure that freedom, democracy and the rule of law are upheld. We are also counting on the power of art and culture to forge identity. Protecting a shared Europe means joining forces to promote and maintain Europe's cultural wealth. We stand with the many people, all over Europe, who advocate for these goals as part of initiatives, movements or independently on the ground. As a European family of parties, united in the European Green Party (EGP), we fight across Europe for our ideas.

It seems likely that, following the European elections, we will see a strong nationalist bloc in the European Parliament, which will act in a destructive and anti-European fashion. We want to do everything in our power to make sure there is a progressive and pro-European majority in the European Parliament – a majority against the conservative status quo and against the nationalists, a majority

which renews Europe's promise and a majority for a Commission President who upholds these values.

Europe's future has never looked as uncertain as it does today. The direction the European Union will take, whether it will ultimately fail or find its way through to a place of new strength and clout as a European democracy depends very much on the common approach which pro-Europeans take.

It is by no means certain that we will win this fight. But we will surely lose if we don't fight now. The European story is the story of losses and defeats and false leaders par excellence. But nothing ever got better from people sitting on their hands.

This is why we are calling on you: let us renew the promise of Europe together. Vote for Europe, because Europe is the answer. Vote BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN! In 2019, you won't find a more determined political force working for a unified, ecological, feminist and just Europe.

Europe can do it. If we want it to.