

Dear delegates,

With great enthusiasm and an even greater sense of urgency, I present my candidacy for the Committee of the European Green Party. Realising global and local change, based on the values of social justice and sustainable development, has been the key driver for my international and political work over the past three decades.

I consider myself to be a feminist activist, with work experience in international NGOs and local politics. In my first job, when I advocated and defended the rights of sex workers, I experienced how important it is to work inclusively and never just for, but always with the people involved. Sex workers call it 'nothing about us, without us' and it has become a guiding motto for me. Later, in my work in the fight against human trafficking, I learned that the injustice of exploitation can only be tackled with (economic) systemic change. These two lessons have been the guiding principles in my work ever since.

I have experienced that change happens when people in their own communities raise their voices and stand up for their rights.

My political career started in 2006 as councillor and group leader of GroenLinks in the Amsterdam city council and in 2018, I was appointed as deputy mayor of Amsterdam on spatial development and sustainability. In the area of urban planning, I changed the focus from the number of houses a city can build, to the question for whom these houses are built, how to preserve 'free non-commercial spaces' in a dense and expensive city like Amsterdam and how to involve local communities. Together with civil servants, urban planners and neighbourhoods, we developed a long-term vision for the spatial development of the city, called 'De Menselijke Metropool' (the human metropolis).

While my previous work experience was focused on women's rights and migrant (workers) rights, the link with sustainability was always obvious to me. The system that exploits people, is the same system that exhausts our planet. We need a system change to achieve climate justice, making sure that saving the planet and enhancing peoples' rights go hand in hand. I was very fortunate that Kate Raworth, inventor of the Doughnut Economy, accepted my invitation to work with us to develop the circular economy strategy for Amsterdam. The rest is history: as soon as our strategy was launched in 2020, it was picked up by other governments and media across the globe. To me, this proves that people everywhere are longing for change.

Doughnut economics strives to meet the needs of all people within the means of the planet. To me, this is what green politics is about: to seek a just and sustainable future in international solidarity. It is also what is needed from the European Union, as a stronghold for democracy, human rights and civil liberties. But in the past decades the EU has also let us down, by favouring the greed of the free market over the needs of people and planet and violating the rights of refugees. Now that Europe is under both the attack and the influence of the radical right, it is even more important to defend the principles Europe stands for. We cannot halt the advance of the far right by presenting the 'light' version of their ideas: we can only stop them by showing that another society is actually possible. This is what the European Green Party represents, and this is what I am eager to contribute to.

I believe the European Green Party can bring together and lead a broad progressive movement. We need to seek cooperation with like-minded parties, but also civil organisations, trade unions and social enterprises. I would love to join forces with people and organisations from all over Europe – especially in countries where the space for civil society and for green and progressive politics is shrinking. Migrant workers fighting for their rights, NGO's providing support for people living in vulnerable situations, young people who are seeking regenerative ways of living, local green councillors who have made their cities healthier, cooperatives and commons who present new economic models; to learn from all these examples how to build a fair and sustainable future. Together with this large and diverse coalition of progressive actors, we can present an alluring and realistic alternative for the current neo-liberal policies and show that a just and green Europe is possible.

Looking forward to meeting you all in Dublin!

Green greetings,

Marieke