

SIBYLLE STEFFAN

Why I'm running again

"We do it for the people and the planet."

That was the guiding thought when we started discussing our programme for the European elections almost two years ago. We were thinking about the needs of people in their everyday lives and how our answer, the green and social deal, would help fight both the cost of living and the climate crisis. We were thinking about Maria, a single mom, who would profit from a better insulated home and lower energy costs. Now, two years and my first mandate in the EGP committee later, I was reflecting on what happened since we put this project to paper.

What did we achieve?

The easily measurable results are mixed: the Green group in the European Parliament got smaller and the far right won almost all over Europe. The success of even the most radical far right voices left me stunned for weeks after the elections. Greens clearly lost in some strongholds, often in national contexts of difficult governing coalitions. But we also welcomed new MEPs of new member parties in the South and the East, often with a strong social profile - which was one of the EGP's strategic goals. The most diverse group ever then had the energy and legitimacy to negotiate our priorities in a complex political setting. Seeing the fruits of our strategy motivates me to continue building up on these.

We achieved a lot together.

Especially in a political reality where we find ourselves pretty much alone fighting for the people and the planet, it matters most how we work together as a political family. We are the one political force at European level that never stopped exchanging and discussing - no matter how difficult the questions ahead of us were. *Together* has become a political statement that we hold up against the exclusion and fear fueled by autocrats, fascists and demagogues.

Together, we developed a manifesto, that appealed to voters, unified the family and was highly appraised by civil society. *Together*, we developed a common strategy putting pressure on conservatives not to collaborate with the far right, while standing ready to change people's lives for the better. *Together*, we created an amazing momentum with the Lyon congress electing our leading candidates Terry and Bas who personalized the hope, optimism and fearlessness that our campaign answered to populists' hate. *Together* with you, I want to continue working on how we grow even closer as a political family.

What's next?

Wind is blowing into our faces and it will continue to do so. Many Green parties face similar difficulties throughout different national political contexts. I see the next committee's main task in creating even more cohesion and facilitating to clearly identify our common challenges, develop a common analysis and a toolbox of best practices trying to answer them. For me it's clear that we need to continue and enhance our work on strengthening our social profile, on finding smart strategies against the far right and on working with civil society to be on top of the debate and to build broad alliances.

I'm running again as a member of the next committee of the European Greens to fight for a greener and more social Europe with you - and for more Europe within the Greens.

How to reach me

sibylle.steffan@europeangreens.eu
insta: @frau_sibylle

What I've done so far

in the European Greens

I'm a member of the European Greens' committee since 2022, amongst others co-responsible for the manifesto, the AMC, the Nordic, Baltic and German speaking member parties and the local councilors.

Since 2018 I've been a delegate to the European Greens for Bündnis 90/Die Grünen and a substitute member of the editorial group of the Manifesto in 2018/19.

in the German Greens

I have been the co-spokesperson of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen's federal working group on Europe 2017-2022, the party's think tank on European integration, where we organized three conferences a year, wrote position papers and helped bringing Brussels, Berlin, our European neighbors and the regions closer together within the Greens.

In the run up to the European Elections 2019, I was a member of the editorial group of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen's manifesto.

Before, I have been the spokesperson of the regional working group on Europe in Berlin/Brandenburg 2014 - 2017, a member of the Party Council of the Berlin Greens 2016 - 2018, a deputy spokesperson of the federal working group on Europe 2015 - 2017 and an active member of Berlin-Neukölln's local Greens since 2013 where I was running in the regional elections in 2016.

Fighting the far right: smart strategies and social policies

Fighting the far right is our DNA, being their antidote is our mission. But being merely against the far right is neither a strategy nor a political project. And I believe we need both. The EGP should therefore facilitate an exchange on different strategies against the far right among member parties with a special focus on winning back young voters and women, also building up on experiences of our Greens in government. This will help sharpen future campaigns from the local to the European level.

In parallel, we need to deliver the answers that voters expect from us - a project that encourages them to vote for us, not merely against them. Therefore, the EGP should set up a working group on social policies focusing on the question on which policies deliver win-win-situations for the people and the planet, close to citizens and easy to understand. The experiences by Greens in government on the implementation of certain measures as well as successes from the local level sharpen the outcome. Together, we fill the idea of a green and social deal with life, enrich our policy toolbox by learning from each other and finetune our messaging and campaigning.

Doing it together: strong alliances with civil society

As some of you might have noticed: I have most fun in AMC sessions, love the open and transparent way of our decision making, the focused, interested and passionate energy in the room when negotiating resolutions and exchanging on policy. I believe this is what makes us unique and grow as a European political family - and that we should profit from it much more and use it smarter to connect with what is happening around us. To achieve this, we need more consistent and ongoing exchanges with civil society to be able to take up their main interests, demands and campaigns in our political discussions - which should then make their way into our resolutions. Building up on the work with civil society throughout the manifesto process, this will build long lasting alliances with our partners and position us at the forefront of debates in civil society.

The new committee should appoint responsible members leading on this work, closely exchanging with member parties to encourage them to draft resolutions together, early on and in a transparent process. In turn, we should give more visibility and relevance to our resolutions at our congresses and in our communication to make the engagement of civil society and member parties worthwhile to them. More timely, relevant and newsworthy resolutions will boost the political impact of our congresses.

Growing as a family with more Europe in our parties

Facists and far right populists are not only gaining grounds but also getting into real power. In these times, European political parties have a special role to play as the far right is well organized on the European level and follows a common strategy. Our answer to those who want to dismantle our European dream into nationalist nightmares needs to be a strong, emotional, fiery commitment to what we believe in. And let's be honest: there was no strong European narrative in the last elections. I believe as Greens we should be leading this, starting with ourselves. The new committee should foster our own Europeanization more, asking member parties where they can profit from collaborating with the EGP and other member parties in bi- and trilateral exchanges, in common projects and cross-border party initiatives, and incentivize them. This will lay the foundation for the passion and the narrative we need, alongside our partners in civil society, when facing the next elections.

After having focused on our EU member parties in the European elections and with the overall political debate on EU enlargement going on, it is also the perfect moment for the EGP to focus on our non-EU Member Parties and on potential new candidates. In order to get established member parties engaged in this process more, an EGP mentoring programme on specific aspects such as developing party structures, dealing with volunteers, funding or policy development should bring together exactly those in the parties who work on it. I believe this will serve two purposes: Europeanization of our established member parties and capacity building of newer and future ones.

Thank you!

Lastly, I want to thank all of you who are active in the EGP, the other outgoing Committee Members and mostly the great EGP staff for their tireless work in the last 2,5 years, making the EGP what it is and keeping it fun, motivating, inspiring, interesting, and instructive to work with you all - which is the not at last why I would love to continue as a member of the next committee and hope for your support!

What else

I'm Sibylle, 37 years old, and grew up in the lovely, very remote forested region called Sauerland in North-Rhine Westphalia.

I first studied comparative literature, psychology and Scandinavian studies in Bonn and Paris (B.A., 2006 - 2009), then European studies (Erasmus-Mundus) in Uppsala and Göttingen (M.A., 2010 - 2012).

I started working as an assistant to the Green group in the Bundestag (2012 - 2014), then as policy advisor both in the Bundestag (2014 - 2018) and the European Parliament and am since 2019 happy head of office of our chair of the internal market committee Anna Cavazzini in the European Parliament focusing on circular economy and consumer protection .

Apart from German and English I love speaking cute French and some rusty Swedish.

