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Photo



Video

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Motivation Letter [PDF]

Brussels, November 28 2023

Dear Green friends,

Our upcoming European campaign poses formidable challenges. In 2019, I had the honor of serving as your Spitzenkandidat, steering through what could be deemed the inaugural European climate campaign. Travelling from Helsinki to Barcelona, from Sofia to Dublin, I saw Fridays for Future active everywhere and making climate change one of the main topics in all the European debates we had back then. Culminating in the largest Green Group in the European Parliament ever.

The 2024 campaign, however, presents heightened difficulties. International tensions encircle Europe, from the Middle East to Ukraine. Simultaneously, the United States gears up for a Presidential campaign with uncertain outcomes. Amidst this, the European Union must carve a more politically sovereign position. Yet, the pressing issue in our countries is the soaring cost of living for many, intensifying uncertainties about the future.

Far right extremists stand ready to exploit those uncertainties and anxieties by giving false promises as if the past can be restored, global problems can be ignored and minorities are the ideal scapegoats for all the problems. The recent Dutch elections results have showed me all too closely how those far right promises attract many people in the voting booth.

We Greens have the responsibility to be the antidote of the far right. And we can be that antidote. However, this requires a broadening of our climate campaign. While we know that the climate urgency is stronger than ever, climate extremes are hitting our societies on a weekly basis, temperature records are already going beyond 1.5ºC and sometimes even beyond 2ºC. There is a political backlash against Europe's Green Deal agenda.

As Greens we will stand for Europe's Green Deal agenda, however we will also campaign on a much more coherent new Green Deal agenda. Von der Leyen's Green Deal 1.0 was only about climate and energy. It failed to deliver on the other crises, like pollution, addressing long-lived chemicals like PFAS and addressing the biodiversity crisis. Instead it gave way for more glyphosate, it delivered a failed reform of our Common Agricultural Policies, and the trade agenda was disconnected from any green transition agenda. We Greens will fight for a more comprehensive Green Deal, addressing the triple crises, with a transition of our food system as one of the most important priorities after the elections.

The Green Deal 1.0 agenda certainly failed on addressing the cost of living crisis. *Leave no one behind* has been a point of attention, but it was mostly addressed through the creation of certain funds. However, our economic system is inherently accelerating inequalities in our societies. Those who have the means can use those to further accumulate capital. And the most vulnerable people are being left behind. As Greens we will have to put redistributional instruments at the forefront of our social fight. And let's be honest, some of the green measures have been out of reach for those people who are struggling to pay the bills. In the 2024 campaign, it is of utmost importance that we show how our climate and environmental agenda is there to serve everyone, and not to make the lives of people more complicated. Without a socially just transition, the green transition will fail.

Our 2024 campaign needs to be an assertive campaign about our Green transition. A Green transition that delivers on quality jobs, a cleaner environment and lower costs of living. The

current energy crisis is a fossil fuel crisis: we chose to depend way too much on doubtful regimes that are willing to misuse their power over our resource dependency. In order to lower our resource dependency we need to create a more sovereign Europe. A Europe that takes its international relations serious as equal partners.

This requires a massive European investment programme; the opposite of the renewed calls for austerity that will only deepen our crises. Greens across Europe have been consistently calling for European investment programmes, going against the frugal dominance in some of our countries. This also allows us to be much more outspoken towards our industries. It's the conservative right in Europe that pretends that our industry can compete internationally by pushing for less regulation. We Greens are the partners of those industries that truly want to innovate and create future quality jobs within Europe. A Green Deal 2.0 is an essential prerequisite for our future industry and not a threat to our industry.

At the international stage we Greens have a consistent agenda on protecting human rights and our democratic values. Rightfully so, Europe is called out for its double standards, be it in our relation with regimes in Egypt or Qatar, or in our relation with Israel. In our 2024 campaign the fight for our rule of law will be crucial, both within in the European Union and outside. And again, the far right doesn't care anything about the protection of civil liberties. They also do not care about the importance of inclusivity across societies. See how Orbán is suffocating the civil society; see how Meloni is discriminating our LGTBIQ+ communities, and see how all right-wing politicians are using refugees as a scapegoat for all the problems within our housing and health care sectors. We Greens need to step up our offensive fight on defending everyone (!) in our European society.

It is clear that for all our values and political agenda, the far right is our enemy. The far right is not providing solutions; instead, it is offering polarization and exclusion. Anyone can be next to be excluded. Exclusion always starts with the vulnerable minorities, but exclusion never stops there. This will be key in our 2024 campaign as well. To succeed, we need to work closely together with all progressive forces in Europe. In the Netherlands we already do that with our social-democratic friends, because we have the same agenda. At the European level this cooperation is not as close as we see it in the Netherlands. This is also something I want to work on: bundling forces where needed. There is simply too much at stake at this moment.

Yes, the 2024 campaign will be more difficult than in 2019. And yes, we Greens will be more in the line of attacks, as we see in some of our countries, certainly in those where we currently govern. However, we have the right people to turn this 2024 campaign into an assertive campaign. This proactive campaign aims to deliver on our commitment to a truly green, socially just, and inclusive transition. We intend to reach out to those who feel marginalized by false promises, forging new alliances with innovative green companies along the way. By doing so, we aspire to create an engaging and empowering campaign that fights for the inclusivity of all Europeans. I eagerly anticipate participating in this dynamic campaign and hope to play a significant role as Spitzenkandidat.

Let's bring it on!

Bas Eickhout

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