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Eļīna Pinto – Political agenda – Europe Empowers

As I put forward my bid for the *Spitzenkandidat* selection of the European Greens, I stand for Europe that Empowers.

I come from the Northeastern border of Europe. It is where we need the EU to help accelerate future-proof reforms for a greener economy, but also where the EU's past policy errors are still painfully visible – with austerity having left whole regions without the energizing presence of young talent and future prospects. It is where we need the EU for empowering individual freedoms and equality, and also from where we were calling for realistic caution and energy autonomy with regard to Russia for far too long. This is where – twenty years after re-joining the European family – a new generation of Europeans like us in Progresīvie are ready to take full responsibility for and leadership role in a reenergized, progressive Europe.

My three children, when asked where they come from, answer that they are Europeans. They say they have roots in three great naval nations – on the Baltic coast, in Portugal and in Luxembourg (always masterfully navigating between the bigger neighbours). We know in our family how it is to be on the very edge of Europe, and at the same time belong to its very heart, - and that the one cannot do without the other.

This is also what I represent in this bid – strengthening and connecting the rim of Europe to the core of our European policy ideals. Green ideas and politics have been embedded the heartlands of Europe for a while now, but today the European rim marked by coastlines and borderlines is the frontline of our shared values. We witness it most manifestly and tragically in Ukraine, but there are other less visible value battles to be fought around the Europe's rim.

To deliver on this, I stand for the manifesto of the European Greens, and in particular for:

- **Europe that Empowers our connections**

This means a rewired grid of energy interconnections, cross-border and inter-regional rail connectivity and infrastructure for rapid military mobility, such as Rail Baltica. This means a strengthened common European media space; European solutions in support of talent attraction to peripheries; connecting youth – including underprivileged - through Erasmus Equality and European University networks; connecting the local mayors and local green hubs across Europe and with the accession countries. This is Europe within which everyone is free to move, but no one needs to feel the need to leave due to discrimination, lack of access to healthcare or in-work poverty.

- **Europe that Empowers us for peace**

Beyond the commitment to conflict prevention and resolution, this means a coherent, modern, credible and effective European security and defence policy, with coordinated, mobile and interoperable capabilities and command algorithms strengthening the complementarity of European and NATO frameworks, including with regard to cyberthreats and hybrid warfare. This includes mainstreaming biodiversity and climate targets within all security and defence instruments.

Our commitment to peace also means us standing firm, for as long as it takes for a full and just victory, in our undivided solidarity and support for Ukraine in every possible way.

This needs to go hand in hand with a strengthened commitment to alleviating humanitarian causes and support for climate activists and human rights defenders across the globe.

- **Europe that Empowers us for a new standard of wellbeing**

Ours is the EU that fully embraces the European Green transition and raises our collective level of climate ambition, accompanied by robust skills agenda and social support measures to enable the change. This means nurturing of green innovation and industry to increase attractive employment opportunities. This means a strong push for organic and agri-ecologic production. This means to not only protect and preserve our biodiversity for future generations, but also to increase the resilience of our economic system with stable and secure green energy autonomous of hostile regimes. This means a strong European Health Union. This requires economic governance allowing for the necessary room for manoeuvre to finance investments in a just transition, and a wellbeing reference framework for the EU budget.

- **Europe that Empowers our voices and trust**

This means raising the voices of youth, women, LGBTIQ+, civil society, the underprivileged often excluded from the halls of decision-making. This means an EU-driven binding recognition of basic rights like marriage equality for all and protection from gender-based violence across the EU – as, despite our efforts, reactionary policies are still too deeply engrained in some EU Member States. This means acknowledging the significance and empowering the civic role of the mobile EU citizens. This means making citizen voices better heard in EU decisions and elections, through rollout of i-voting and innovative citizen engagement.

This also means protecting our shared ideals of freedom and liberty - effectively combating both kinetic and hybrid aggression from hostile regimes on the outside, but also at times cynical and opportunistic manipulation from within. This requires a renewed focus on robust rule of law and anticorruption effort, with a strengthened EPPO and the highest standard of integrity for the EU policymakers.

With a shared history with our Eastern neighbours, a shared tradition with the Southern seafarers and a passion for a re-empowered Europe I believe to share with all of you, I am putting forward my candidacy for the *Spitzenkandidat* selection in support of our European election campaign 2024.



Elina Pinto