

A Green New Deal for Europe

Manifesto for the 2009
European elections



green
party



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Vote for a
Green New Deal.
Vote Steven Agnew
for Europe.

Europe needs a new direction.

The financial crisis and the credit crunch have brought the failings of current economic and social policies sharply into focus. They have exposed a wider systemic failure as the world is facing a serious fundamental resource crunch that will impact on every aspect of our lives, from the food we eat to the energy we use.

These 'crises' should be seen as an opportunity to transform our economic and social system into one that will offer generations-to-come a future based on stability, sufficiency and sustainability. In Northern Ireland, we are well placed to be at the forefront of this change – to take advantage of all the benefits offered by the need for skills, industry and services for a low-carbon economy.

Europe faces social, economic and environmental challenges that transcend borders. As the financial crisis once again demonstrated, only by cooperating – at European and global level – can we rise above these challenges. This requires a European Union acting strongly for the future of all its citizens and residents.

The Greens are strong in Europe with 43 MEPs from 14 different countries. The

Green group in the European Parliament is a group with a common ideology rather than a marriage of convenience. Electing a Green MEP will give the people of Northern Ireland an opportunity to have a real influence on decisions. The European Greens have driven the policies that have helped to protect our environment, increased social protections for workers and ensured that Europe leads the way in the fight against climate change. There is much still to do, so it is important that Northern Ireland is represented in this influential group.

The majority of our legislation, including almost all environmental regulation, is initiated in the Europe. When so much is at stake it is wholly irresponsible for parties to campaign on an outdated sectarian agenda which has no relevance in a European context. Elections to the European Parliament are an opportunity for the people of Northern Ireland to make their voice heard on issues that will affect all of our lives here, and across Europe. That's why we are addressing the issues at hand and presenting policies that offer economic, social and environmental benefits to all.



A Green New Deal for sustainability

The Greens want to build solutions for a sustainable future.

Rising to the challenges brings real opportunities. Shifting to a greener economy and combating climate change will boost employment and make us more self-sufficient, reducing our dangerous reliance on energy imports. A more sustainable approach to our agricultural, marine and energy resources – which Northern Ireland has in abundance – is crucial at a time when energy and food prices are hitting low and middle income people hard.

The Greens want a responsible Europe.

The European Union should defend social systems and labour conditions from the pressures

of fierce and unfettered competition, both within Europe and beyond. Economic interests must not come at the expense of human and civil rights. The European Union must listen and be accountable to its citizens and residents, while championing peace, democracy and human rights around the world.

The Greens offer a real alternative for Europe.

The Green New Deal means: a Europe of solidarity that can guarantee its citizens a good quality of life based on economic, social and environmental sustainability; a truly democratic Europe that acts for its citizens and not just narrow industry interests; a Europe that acts for a green future.

A Green New Deal: A resource revolution

A real alternative for Europe: securing our energy and environmental future

We need a resource revolution to shift from our present course of over-exploitation and environmental destruction. If we continue to ravage our finite natural resources, we will need two planets to sustain our lifestyles within 25 years. This course is economically unsustainable. It also seriously threatens our climate, ecosystems and biodiversity.

Europe must also play a leading role in forging a binding international climate agreement under the UN framework based on the latest science. This agreement must commit industrialised countries to the necessary emissions reductions, as well as recognising their responsibility to support mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries, including reducing emissions from deforestation and forest

degradation, particularly from tropical forests.

Combating climate change is a win-win process.

A combination of ambitious and binding targets, of incentives and of public investments into green technologies and services will help create millions of green jobs in Europe and tens of millions worldwide, which are much needed at this difficult period of economic slowdown.

The EU must set itself the target of creating five million green collar jobs over the coming five years. In Northern Ireland 50,000 jobs can be created and sustained for electricians, fitters, plumbers, engineers, construction workers, project workers, and sales and marketing staff, through the utilisation of our existing agricultural, industrial and research and development sectors. These are skills we have in abundance and jobs that cannot be outsourced.

“In Northern Ireland 50,000 jobs can be created – electricians, engineers, construction workers, and sales and marketing staff.”

A Green New Deal for energy and transport



The Greens want Europe to place much greater priority on energy efficiency.

We want to set a binding target to reduce energy consumption 20% by 2020, as well as supporting and promoting the intelligent design of heating and cooling technology both in industry and in the housing sector. Jobs can be created through insulation of buildings, smart metering and the development of electric vehicles.

Revolutionising how we use energy and ending our damaging dependence on oil means we must also move green. Transport is the fastest growing source of manmade greenhouse gas emissions. The EU needs to actively work to create a sustainable transport system. Ending the direct and indirect subsidisation of inefficient and polluting transport modes, like aviation and road transport, is an important step in ensuring the full environmental costs are taken into account. We want to speed-up investment in trans-

European railroad connections and networks. Freight must be shifted from roads to rail and inland waterways on a much bigger scale. Affordable public transport and sustainable transport options in our cities, such as cycling and walking, must be promoted.

Renewables must be put at the centre of European energy policy for the 21st Century.

In Northern Ireland, we currently import over 98% of our energy for generating electricity, heating our buildings and powering our cars. Yet, we have vast natural energy resources, particularly in wind, biomass, tidal and geothermal. The Carbon Trust has estimated that in Northern Ireland 33,000 jobs can be created in renewable energy alone.

The Greens are calling for the creation of a European Renewables Community (ERENE) to support the long-term goal of 100% energy from renewable sources. We need a concerted investment



drive in green technologies in which the European Investment Bank must play a role. A real renewables boom requires a new approach to energy supply: truly unbundling ownership of distribution and production, while promoting a grid without borders and the smarter use of energy.

The Green New Deal in action in Northern Ireland

If there's a local symbol that sums up the promise of the Green Party in 2009, it's the new lease of life brought to the Harland and Wolff ship yard by the growth in markets in renewable energy technologies. Emerging from a troubled economic and political history, the historic Belfast ship yard has secured jobs and promises of new business by recognising that the green agenda is also an economic one.

Harland and Wolff have harnessed traditional engineering skills base and local business acumen to

environmental problem-solving. In the same way, the Greens can harness Europe wide drive toward environmental security, social justice and one-planet economics.

Sound business judgement and a keen awareness of the rise in world markets in environmental technologies, have helped managers at the shipyard recognise that the far-reaching economic changes demanded by climate change can be transformed into local economic opportunities for job and wealth creation. These are the principles a Green MEP for Northern Ireland will pursue.

Harland and Wolff are currently producing wind turbines and it was there that the SeaGen, a world's first in tidal technology was created. As well as the turbine installed in Strangford Lough, two others have been exported to Canada. This shows that Northern Ireland can return to its rightful place as a world leader in manufacturing and engineering.

A Green New Deal for agriculture and food

The Greens want Europe to ensure its citizens have access to healthy food at fair prices, rather than the limited options the food industry wants to offer them.

Farming, fishing and food policies should encourage mutual responsibility between farmers, fishermen, authorities and consumers. Northern Ireland farmers and fishermen produce some of the best quality produce in Europe and more needs to be done to ensure that they receive a fair price for their product.

The Common Agricultural Policy has encouraged agricultural irresponsibility, with the agro-industry dictating the market terms and gearing production to capitalise on subsidies, regardless of the environmental consequences. The Greens want to use the upcoming review to transform EU agricultural policy in a way that supports and encourages farmers to produce quality food in a sustainable way so that public money is used for public good, with any subsidies being linked to environmental stewardship and high animal welfare standards. The future of agriculture lies in organic farming and fair trade.

Crucial to this is a ban on genetically-modified organisms (GMOs). GM crops pose a serious threat to Europe's biodiversity, as well as the risks of cross-contaminating organic and conventional farming. For this reason, the Greens are



working to make the European Union a GMO-free zone and working at a local level to ensure that our island remains GM free.

Farming and food policies should promote local markets for agricultural products, eliminating unnecessary transportation. They must encourage more sustainable production methods that aim to conserve biodiversity and water resources, and enhance soil fertility, reducing the use of toxic and polluting pesticides and fertilisers. This approach will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from intensive agriculture. It will also reduce the risks to public health caused by industrial farming. Animals must be treated ethically, in agriculture as in all other contexts.

A healthy Europe is a wealthy Europe.

EU citizens are concerned about the safety of the air they breathe, the water they use and the food they eat. Environmental pollution damages public health, which in turn places a strain on societies and economies. The EU needs to do more to address the threats to public health, whether water- or air-borne, noise, toxic substances, or through the spread of diseases. The EU has to halt the loss of biodiversity at home and overseas territories.

A Green New Deal for social justice

Social justice and globalisation: Fighting for a fairer Europe

The system needs change. The Greens want to end the careless deregulation that has enabled big business to dictate its own terms regardless of the real impact on the economy and society at large. This approach encouraged the risky speculation and overexploitation that has trapped us in a damaging boom-to-bust cycle. We want to take this opportunity to develop a new economy driven by long-term prosperity, not short term profiteering.

We want a responsible and stable Europe, which invests ethically and where prosperity is defined by the wellbeing of all people.

Financial markets must be put on a leash.

They must cease to be casinos in which people's homes and livelihoods are the chips on the table. Their transnational nature demands a coordinated European response that leads

and links in to international efforts. We need an EU-level watchdog with teeth – a body to scrutinise and regulate financial markets and services. EU regulations must rule out any kind of tax evasion and prevent harmful tax competition for corporate revenues and savings, which undermines social justice.

There must be equal pay for equal work for men and women alike, as well as for posted, immigrant or temporary workers. Equal opportunities for all must be guaranteed both within and outside the workplace and regardless of sex, age, ethnicity, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Nobody should suffer the indignity of living in poverty.

The Green New Deal aims to reverse the widening gap between rich and poor and guarantee a decent minimum living standard for all Europeans. Governments should introduce minimum wages by law or collective agreements and a minimum income above the poverty line, guaranteed by social security, for all in need. The EU should be guided by the principle of equal pay for equal work and not be a battleground for the lowest wage.

Europe must offer greater stability to people of all ages. Senior citizens must be guaranteed a voice in society, enabling them to actively participate in economic, social and civic life. This implies guaranteeing sound pensions. Community-based services must





exist to address the individual needs of the frail and vulnerable. Young people must have access to more secure jobs and better access to education, training and housing.

Europe must also play its part in building societies and eliminating poverty in other parts of the world. We need to speed up efforts to deliver on the Millennium Development Goals. The principle of global social and environmental justice must guide all EU policies and its position in global institutions.

The Greens want to strengthen workers' rights. The European Union suffers from profound imbalances. It has developed cutting edge rules on business competition, but labour legislation and social rights have not kept pace. Loopholes and uncertainties have led to decisions by the European Court of Justice that tend to put business interest before workers' rights.



“The EU has developed cutting edge rules on competition, but labour legislation and social rights have not kept pace.”

A Green New Deal for a Europe where all people are heard



Democracy and human rights: a responsible EU that listens and is heard

Europe needs to listen and everyone's voice should be heard. The Greens want to reform the EU, so that it can become a truly participatory democracy. As the only EU institution directly-elected by the people, the European Parliament should be granted the right to initiate legislation.

More needs to be done to encourage young people to participate, for example by lowering the voting age. Citizens should also have the opportunity of direct democracy through European referenda on issues of Europe-wide concern.

The Greens will fight to apply

the Charter of Fundamental Rights, to include all members of society and defend the rights of vulnerable and minority groups. This implies fighting for equal rights for women, ethnic minorities including the Roma, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and religious minorities as well as for social and civil rights.

This also means continuing the fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other religious intolerance, sexism, discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and all forms of violent political extremism in the European Union. Human rights are for all, particularly within EU Member States.

The fundamental right of equality between men and women must be made a reality.

Good legislation already exists but is scattered around Europe. The Greens want to see the best national laws applied across the EU, whether regarding equality, pro-choice issues, domestic violence, maternity and paternity leave or political representation.

Only one-third of MEPs and European Commissioners are women. The Greens have an equal number of male and female MEPs and we want the EU to follow our lead.

Immigration is an opportunity, not a threat.

We need positive-minded policies that will allow people to come here legally and efficiently. Immigrants who work in the EU deserve equal rights and equal pay.

People who seek asylum in Europe deserve to be treated better. The Greens have opposed repressive laws on returning unauthorised migrants and will continue to fight inhumane or xenophobic legislation. Europe has a duty to provide shelter and

protection to those who need it. Europe should be a bridge that will allow people to come and live here in a legal way. It will only be able to do this effectively when all EU countries share the effort instead of leaving border countries to take the strain.

A revision of the Dublin Convention, which aims to harmonise EU asylum policies and guarantees protection in line with international obligations, is a must. Europe must also do more to fight the despicable trafficking of men, women and children across its borders.

Transparency must be an obligation, not an option.

The Greens demand full transparency for all involved in EU decision-making processes. This implies taking a tough stand against corruption at all levels. The EU itself must be more accountable to its public. It is time to open closed files and closed doors. The Greens will also continue to put the spotlight on the shady and powerful vested interests that seek to influence decisions in Brussels.

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Delivering a Green New Deal for Europe

The Greens have fought for a sustainable, social and more democratic Europe since our entry into the European Parliament in 1984. Recognising the need for truly European solutions to European problems, we are the most closely cooperating political family in the European Parliament. This has helped us punch above our weight and have a much greater influence on decisions at European level than our numbers would otherwise allow.

We believe a Green New Deal is needed to overcome the financial, economic, resource,

energy and climate crises we face. The Green New Deal means massive investment in sustainable sectors, putting the quality of life first and ensuring the creation of millions of 'green jobs'.

Realising the Green New Deal means building alliances. We will look for allies in civil society, in parliaments and in governments that will work to achieve this change of course. However, ensuring that Europe gets back on track means getting involved, convincing others and voting Green. You can influence what is happening in Europe.



On June 4th, choose a
Green New Deal.

Vote Green.

**Vote Steven Agnew
No!**

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Green New Deal

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