PL Political Platform

Organization:	CDN
Resolution date:	12.03.2023
Agenda item:	3. Organisational and Governance Documents

Motion text

Introduction

We, the Cooperation and Development Network Eastern Europe (CDN), are committed to upholding and advancing the values of the Green movement. We believe that the well-being of people and the flourishing of the environment are closely linked and that one cannot defend the interests of one while forgetting the other.

We are convinced that a radical change of our current social, political, and economic institutions is necessary. Eastern Europe – where issues such as corruption, armed conflicts, pollution and discrimination loom large –can only profit from a Green vision. We strive for a world in which human rights are upheld, the genders are truly equal, people actively participate in democracy, minorities are included, and the environment is protected. We believe that human and social rights are fundamental everywhere and that global affairs must be conducted in a spirit of peace, solidarity and fairness.

As Greens, we know that our values are interrelated and that solutions are sustainable only when these values mutually support each other.

This document lays out the values that inform and motivate our actions.

1. Democracy

We believe in democracy as one of the cornerstones of a free and just society. Democracy includes more than just elections – a strong and fair institutional framework, free and diverse media, human rights, and economic and social equality are all crucial. It is especially important that our political

structures are inclusive and give a voice to minorities and the disenfranchised.

We strive for a democracy that enables and encourages active participation in the shaping of our common future.

Democracy

We believe in democracy as the fairest way of governance. But for democracy to fulfil this promise all citizens must have equal rights and the capacity to be involved in decision-making processes. Election systems must be representative and inclusive in order to give a voice to the disenfranchised and to avoid the unjust accumulation of power. We support self-governance at the grass-root level as the most non-discriminatory and just manifestation of democratic governance. We believe in self-determination as all people's right to pursue their

independent political status or cultural development without external interference.

We stand for actively engaged civil society as an integral part of democracy. An appropriate environment for a sustainable and well-functioning civil society is of utmost importance for the development and stability of democratic practices. Voluntary action and active citizenship is important tool to strengthen democracy.

We demand:

- democratic governance in all social and political institutions;
- the implementation of grass-root methods on all levels of governance;
- the support decentralisation policies;
- that community activism and human solidarity be encouraged by the legislative framework;
- the recognition and validation of voluntary work by employers and educational institutions;
- the guarantee of youth participation in institutional politics;
- that the voting age is lowered to at least 16.

Human rights and the rule of law

We believe that human rights are universal. A democratic society must ensure the protection of individual liberties, human rights and the rights of minorities. Freedom of expression and speech must always be respected. We acknowledge that respect for human rights cannot be guaranteed without recognizing and combating hate speech, which affects the most vulnerable groups in society.

The protection of human rights depends on the rule of law. Equality, before the law is imperative for all societies for it, ensures that all people, regardless of their status, get equal access to the rights they are entitled to. It furthermore allows governmental decisions to be challenged on an equal footing.

The rule of law both depends on and enables transparency, which is a crucial element and backbone of democratic societies. Transparency provides powerful tools that enable people to hold their governments to account and help prevent abuse of power and corruption. We believe that transparency and rule of law are not only a matter of justice, but it further enables people to empower themselves.

We demand:

- open and accessible government documents and data;
- fair and accessible legislative processes;
- that states recognize and fight hate speech;
- that laws are designed in accordance with people's rights;
- the active participation of civil society in the design and management of public institutions;
- that governments ensure full and equal access to justice for all citizens.

Media and digital rights

A free, diverse and critical media landscape is crucial to a well-functioning democracy, allowing citizens to express their views, gain information, and engage in political deliberation. We believe that only a media that is not controlled by a few big enterprises and political actors can fulfil its role in holding governments accountable.

Media must be supported in this task by adequate transparency laws and the protection from government interference and arrest.

The internet has quickly become one of the main public spaces where people gain and exchange information, both among themselves as well as with those who are in positions of government. For the internet to remain a space where society can meet and deliberate, we must ensure that the internet is free from mass surveillance both by government and commercial entities. New online forms of participatory democracy and culture must be explored. We must encourage the formation of free and open online social spaces that are self- governed and inclusive.

We demand:

- an end to censorship and threats to free media - both online and offline;
- a media law that ensures that media is not controlled by the economic elite advancing their own interests;
- an end to the detention and imprisonment of journalists;
- the protection of journalists' sources and whistle-blowers;
- an end to invasions of privacy online both by governments and by companies;
- establishment and sufficient support of an independent public broadcasting;
- support for alternative online communities that function according to principles of self-governance and inclusion;
- net neutrality, which implies treating all Internet communications equally;
- affirmative action programs that foster the active participation of women and other disadvantaged genders in the digital sphere;
- ensuring equal access for everyone regardless of geographical disbalances.

Solidarity against nationalism

An inclusive society and long term sustainable prosperity can only be achieved with a defeat of exclusionary ideologies such as right-wing nationalism and populism. Applying the populist narrative to politics, social and economic policy leads to insecurity, divisions and exclusion of the most threatened groups. This can, in the future open space for conflicts between these groups. Nationalist and xenophobic political agendas further weaken the disenfranchised and strengthen the powerful. Nationalism is often bound up in racism and bigotry, organising against which is a key part of Green politics.

We believe solidarity to be a foundation on which all progress is built. We stand for cooperation and mutual collaboration as solutions to the split societies that exclusionary ideologies create.

We demand:

- the rejection of politics of division and politics that seek to use nationalistic or any other kind of exclusionary rhetoric at the expense of minorities and vulnerable groups;
- not to provide a public arena for rhetoric and policies that aim at inciting hatred;
- an end to the discrimination of groups that do not conform to national customs shared by the majority.

2. Social rights

We believe that social rights are essential for all people to be autonomous members of their societies. Social rights should be considered fundamental and be provided by all governments. Social rights include equal access to quality education and healthcare, right to housing and employment. It is crucial to have a strong implementation of social rights to have an inclusive, equal and just society in peace.

Gender

Gender equality is fundamental to a just society.

The capitalistic economic system and mode of production, alongside long-standing patriarchal traditions, have resulted in the oppressive, exploitative and discriminatory treatment of non-males, effectively relegating them to second- class status. Sustained action, guided by a strong feminist perspective, is needed to overcome this problem. Gender equality is the necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. The first step in achieving these rights is the proportional representation of people of various gender identities in representative bodies.

We demand:

- equal access to the labour market, opportunities and fair pay for people of all genders; the gender pay gap must be eliminated;
- better policies against gender-based violence with determined combating ofdiscrimination and hate crime against LGBTI+ people and legal

recognition of all sexual orientation, gender identities, and gender expression and sex characteristics;

- that governments ensure equal access to social rights for people of all genders;
- LGBTI+ people should have equal rights with regard to marriage, adoption and parenting, work-related benefits, pension rights and immigration and asylum;
- that sex work is regulated -- or at the minimum decriminalised -- to protect the human, health and labour rights of sex workers;
- proportional representation of all gender identities in assemblies on all levels of government.

Social security

We believe that one of the strongest cohesive forces in any society is social solidarity expressed in practice through state-guaranteed social security. Social security is an important means for achieving prosperity for all, equality and meaningful lives. A welfare state should enable all inhabitants to lead dignified lives. In order to achieve this social security should not only ensure survival but enable people to actively participate in the cultural and social life of their communities.

We demand:

- free, accessible and adequate healthcare guaranteed by the state;
- affordable, accessible, adequate housing as well as free public housing guaranteed by the state with a special emphasis on the housing needs of young people;
- the right to an income that covers physical and social needs and which does not depend on employment;
- that all citizens have full and equal opportunities for personal and social development.
- that the housing market/rental market is regulated on the local level, through decisions made by the local government civil society and local communities as equal partners;
- that state bans (either by expropriating or purchasing property) large landlords in the city and turns the property into free or affordable social housing.

Youth

As an organisation of young people, we recognise the key role of youth in society. Youth is not only the future of society but its present too. Often, they are not seen as an active and equal actor in the political, social,

cultural, and economic spheres and are excluded from decision-making processes or treated as mere tokens. We support youth rights in every aspect of social and political life and strive for making youth's voices heard. We believe that active citizenship should be encouraged among youth and, as a minimum, youth rights should be proactively defended in order to strengthen their position in society. Education is one of the most important means enabling youth to stand up for their rights and fully contribute to democracy. We believe the current educational system must be fundamentally reformed enabling the direct and equal participation of students in the learning process. Education is for progress, sustainability, diversity, and prosperity. We highlight the value and importance of non-formal education as an inclusive alternative to current institutional forms of education and as a major provider of skills to foster participation in democracy.

We demand:

- free, accessible, and adequate education for all;
- ensuring youth political representation on national and local levels;
- accessible legal means for youth to insist on their rights;
- youth centres in every community;
- independent funds for youth projects by youth;
- learning processes that are adjusted to individual learners' needs, competencies and interests;
- support for and recognition of non-institutional and alternative forms of education.

Inclusion

As a Green organisation encompassing a geographically and ethnically diverse region, cultural rights and non-discrimination is a vital part of our world-view.

Cultural diversity is of fundamental value to us. Protection of diversity fosters inclusion and equal participation of every person in state affairs, public and everyday life, and guarantees that each individual has equal opportunities for personal and social fulfilment. Inclusion and openness help create a more welcoming society, where a variety of ideas, efforts and perspectives may thrive.

We believe that every community has the right to use their own language and to preserve their traditions as long as they do not violate the rights of others.

Therefore we stand for social sensitivity, peaceful co-existence, preservation of local languages and cultural heritage and traditions where their compatible with non-violence and inclusion of vulnerable groups. We condemn any discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, belief, self identity et cetera.

We demand:

- that state guarantees for the protection of cultural heritage for all ethnic and cultural groups in accordance with values of non-violence and non-exclusion;
- that discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, belief, self-identity etc. is made illegal;
- that state guarantees for the usage of minority languages in areas where accepting them as official languages is reasonable;
- that states do not impose any defining characteristics, such as exclusionary cultural norms, as the ones to be followed by citizens.

3. Environmental justice

We as Young Greens take ecology and environmental justice as guiding principles in our world view and political ideology. Out of all species on Earth, human beings are the only ones drastically using and subduing nature to suit their own needs. Pollution, the altering of habitats, extinction of species, climate change, active hostilities, et cetera affect all living organisms. A healthy environment and stable ecosystems are a prerequisite for a healthy society. At this moment many are living beyond the capacities of this planet and have little awareness of the repercussions thereof. We need to start acting responsibly and humbly, building a society on the principles of sustainability and respect of nature's capacities, limiting our own harmful impact.

Climate change

Decisive action to counteract climate change should be taken immediately. The global scientific consensus has laid out very clear warnings that this is non-negotiable. As an issue that will have irreversible and tragic effects on all of humankind, this is something we understand as urgent and a priority. To properly fight the acceleration of climate change, climate action should be taken at all levels, from the personal to the global.

We condemn the discourses in mainstream politics relying on future solutions to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis, such as carbon (re)capture, nuclear fusion and heavily electrified machinery. These instruments promote growth based economies which are exploitative of our natural resources and most of individuals in the society. Furthermore, all these solutions shift the responsibility to future generations, while it's in fact, up to us to act today to prevent the worst effects of climate change.

We demand:

- the ownership of responsibility to mitigate the effects of climate crisis by the political and business elites;
- that the biggest polluters – both companies and countries – are held accountable for their contribution to climate change and care for its victims;
- that all states create comprehensive plans to transition to 100% renewable energy that is produced and controlled locally and affordable to everyone;
- that no plans for new fossil fuel extraction or burning are made or approved and divestment from fossil fuel is encouraged;
- that global climate policy (i.e. UNFCCC) is not a vehicle for corporate interest and instead puts the needs of all citizens first.
- the application of present solutions to mitigate climate change instead of potential future instruments;
- the dismissal of exploitative growth based economy in favour of a just degrowth based economy.

Environmental preservation and biodiversity

We recognize that the planet does not serve just humankind but all living beings. We believe that the protection of natural resources and the Earth itself is crucial. Other living beings and their preservation should be considered an important part of all decision making. Energy should be produced sustainably and not do irreversible damage to the planet.

We demand:

- that all policies' effects on the planet are considered and that harmful extraction techniques (e.g. fracking) are banned;
- that authorities stop deforestation and support the growth of new forests and trees;
- that animals be given legal rights that go beyond their utility for humankind;
- more education on endangered plants and animals and the crucial role plants and animals play in our ecosystem;
- that the use of agricultural land for fuel is forbidden and that research into recovering fuels from waste is promoted.

Water and food

Water and food security have to be one of the primary concerns and aims of society. They are basic for the survival of every human being. Access to clean

water resources and quality food should be unconditionally guaranteed as an intrinsic right for all living beings. Consumers should be incentivised to change their habits, prioritising a low carbon diet by consuming local and organic food. We oppose any monopolisation in food production and seed. Food production should be done with great care for their impact on human health, the environment and other living beings and based on principles of sustainability.

We demand:

- clean and potable water for every household; the privatisation of water sources should be forbidden;
- that water and food are secure and sustainable based on the latest scientific knowledge and social values;
- access to true adequate, easy to understand information about the production, origin, content and health effects of the food products we consume;
- a ban on the use of additives and other substances that harm living organisms, soil and water;
- regulation of the monopolies in food production and water provision.

Urban ecosystems

Urban areas are the most quickly developing human settlements in the world. A majority of the population now lives there, making cities a crucial part of our societies. Cities have high demands for goods (e.g. food, water and energy) which they are not fully able to satisfy themselves, and which are imported from other areas. As big concentrations of people and human activity, cities produce and are subject to high pollution and lower standards of living than in rural areas. Cities should not continue to function in a way that is harmful to their inhabitants and the rest of the planet and its people.

We demand:

- that measures of precaution are taken to ensure that the Air Quality Index (AQI) in inhabited areas stays below 100;
- that public transportation is a reliable, accessible, fast and cheap or free option of transport for all citizens;
- that urban areas are transformed to encompass green zones and prioritise cycling and walking to other means of transport;
- an uncompromising zero-waste policy for all national and local waste management systems, with strong incentives (e.g. high fees for unsorted waste);
- the promotion of waste prevention and re-usage of materials from an early age and to all generations of society, and simple and accessible recycling for everyone.

4. Economy

We believe that we urgently need a new form of organising our economy. Our societies should orient themselves away from consumerism and the accumulation of wealth and instead provide everyone with the opportunities needed to live a fulfilled life. The current economic model has had serious negative consequences for people and the environment. Firstly, the unequal distribution of wealth directly affects countless lives and entrenches power imbalances. Secondly, the use of natural resources to produce more and more material goods endangers the environment and affects especially the lives of the marginalised and future generations.

We believe that the answer can only be a community-based approach based on cooperation and sustainability where meeting everyone's fundamental needs – including our desires for sociality and creativity – take centre stage.

Labour

Work constitutes a large part of most people's lives and livelihoods are often directly linked to income generated by labour. Therefore, fair and just labour rights are crucial aspects of personal well-being and functioning democracies. The right not to be exploited in the workplace is fundamental for a healthy society. Women, youth and minorities are still the most vulnerable to exploitation in their work- there should be stronger protections for these groups. Today's economic model has seen a rise in jobs that offer unsatisfactory working conditions such as low wages, unstable hours, tasks that are not mentally stimulating, and precarious contracts. These developments are detrimental to society as a whole. Our economy and concept of work should focus on providing jobs that give enable material and mental well-being.

We demand:

- equal labour rights for all people, regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, or nationality;
- abolishment of unpaid internships;
- a living wage, or income that is enough to sustain your basic needs;
- abolishment of contracts that do not guarantee a set number of hours;
- protection of labour unions and collective bargaining;
- that the highest salary in a company is no more than 6 times the lowest salary.

Trade

As one of the key drivers of globalisation, trade is a crucial aspect of our societies and current economic model. This has resulted in the proliferation of economic inequality and instability, rather than creating an economy that benefits everyone. This has been driven by reckless self-interested behaviour by multinationals and the financial sector and aggressive trade policies that are created in the interest of corporations, not the wider society. This gives unequal power to business interests, leading countries to a democratic deficit. Trade is important and can benefit humanity greatly, but it must be undertaken in the spirit of fair cooperation and respect for the environment.

We demand:

- trade with aggressor countries and authoritarian regimes should be limited;
- that undemocratic trade deals that favour corporate over citizens' interests are replaced with fair trade deals where partners benefit equally;
- that all trade agreements are put under serious scrutiny: negotiations must be transparent and review from citizens groups and civil society should play a crucial role;
- that trade relationships between Eastern Europe and the EU and other major partners are truly beneficial to all parties;
- that all trade agreements have a sincere environmental evaluation chapter taking the centre stage of the contract.

Alternative economic organisation

We envision a system of economic organisation that is based on collective stewardship of our natural resources and collective control of the means of production. Communities need to be in control of the production facilities and decide themselves what their needs are and how they can be best fulfilled. We

need to put an end to the privatisation and commodification of our common goods: our environment, our cultural heritage and the knowledge produced by the sciences.

Work must allow people to contribute to our common good and realise their capacities. Less stress should be put on the production of material goods and more on collaboration, the provision of social goods, and the development of the arts and sciences. This new economy needs to be sustainable in all aspects and always include the needs of future generations and of our environment in its thinking.

We demand:

- reform of intellectual property rights law;
- progressive taxation and prosecution of tax avoidance;
- transparent and participatory budgets controlled by citizens;
- a stop to the privatisation of common goods;
- a re-democratisation of privatised public and common goods;
- support for the establishment of cooperatives.

5. Global Affairs

We strongly believe that the social change we envision can only be achieved through cooperation at the global level aimed at reaching sustainable solutions. We support international organisations, unions and agreements that work towards peaceful solutions to armed conflict and foster cooperation on climate issues, fair international trade and humanitarian support. We call for the countries that have the most access to the wealth to assume responsibility for their historical behaviour and act to lower the difference with the majority of countries, which have suffered and still suffer from exploitation. All international relations should be based on non-violence and conflicts should be solved in negotiations based on mutual respect and multilateral communication. A fairer and more equal world, with a more balanced distribution of goods and resources, is better for everyone.

Peace

We as Young Greens strongly stand for peaceful means as a core principle and strive to create a world with a culture of non-violence. War is both the cause and consequence of great human suffering and as such must be overcome if people are to live fulfilling lives. International cooperation and peaceful facilitation of negotiations should be the primary way of addressing conflict.

We condemn all behaviour by public and private stakeholders that aims at profiting from armed conflict and see it as complicit in the perpetuation of the destruction of societies and the earth. We want to build a strong and sustainable peace by strengthening tolerance, economic equality, environmental

protection, respect of human rights and social security in all parts of the world.

We demand:

- the abolishment of organisations that propagate military actions, except when acting in self-defence against armed oppressive regimes;
- the pursuit of general and complete disarmament and a stop to arms trade;
- an international agreement to ensure a complete and definitive ban on nuclear, biological and chemical arms, anti-personnel mines and depleted uranium weapons;
- respect for everyone's right to self-determination, specifically the peaceful separation of countries who desire independence;
- that the international treaties on armed conflicts, such as the Geneva Convention, are respected in all armed conflicts and that breaches of these treaties are severely punished.

European Union

We understand Europe as being more than just an accumulation of individual countries. Cultural, economic, historical and political reasons make Europe an interdependent and transnational community.

The European Union should be a mutual and crucial project to enhance the cooperation among the countries of the continent. The European Union must be a community based on mutual respect, transparency, and prosperity. We see the future of Eastern European countries as being part of this community, however, not at the expense of becoming a source of underpaid labour or a market for otherwise unwanted products.

We demand:

- that the EU guarantees equal treatment and rights of Eastern European citizens coming to work within the EU in law as well as in practice;
- that Eastern European countries are treated as equal partners within and outside of the EU;
- the democratisation of the EU's institutions – direct elections for the Commission, real decision making power for the Parliament;
- that accession negotiations are transparent and in the best interest of all people and that information regarding accession criteria and progress are publicly available;

Migration

Both voluntary and involuntary migration has increased in recent years due to various factors – it is one of the most pressing matters of our age. Economic uncertainty, armed conflicts and climate change are all driving people away from

their homelands in search of a safer existence. We understand that we all bear the responsibility of providing a safe environment and a fair asylum system for the people fleeing conflict, hunger and oppression. We condemn any form of human trafficking, human rights violation and abuse of power by authorities regarding refugees.

We believe that freedom of movement is the right of every human being. We strive to create a world in which no person is considered illegal, where people are not forced to leave their homes, and where societies show solidarity with all people seeking refuge. Not only does diversity boost the economy and innovation, but a diverse and culturally rich society is a strong one.

We demand:

- a right to asylum in all countries and the abolishment of the concept of illegal persons;
- easing naturalisation procedures;
- the right to reunite with one's family;
- the availability and accessibility of institutions that facilitate integration;
- that the international agreements guaranteeing the basic human rights of refugees and asylum seekers (regardless of their official legal status) be respected;
- that all refugees and asylum seekers have the same social rights as citizens and be allowed to settle in the country of their choosing;
- the abolishment of visa regimes that obstruct the free movement of people, especially between Eastern European countries and the EU.