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Candidacy for the Presidency of the European Parliament

Plenary statement by Ska KELLER (Greens/EFA, DE)

Dear Members of the European Parliament, dear colleagues, but most importantly, dear European citizens. Five weeks ago, you as European citizens have used your rights to vote and elected us as your representatives. You have given us the mandate to shape the future of this House and also the future of the European Union. I want to thank you for putting your trust in this institution. But you have also given us a very clear message, and the message is that the European project is very much alive. You, the voters, have answered the hateful and divisive rhetoric of the populist right with a clear pro-European message. And I thank you for that.

Dear colleagues, the past elections have seen an increased voter turnout. This is a very encouraging sign, but it also means responsibility to us as European Parliament. Thanks to the voters, we have a strong mandate to now decide on the future of Europe and to hold the Commission and the member states accountable. As parliamentarians, we have received a mandate to strengthen the European Parliament as an institution, and I'd say, let's strengthen the Parliament today and let's strengthen it together by electing a Parliament President that embodies the independence of our institution. We cannot accept that the Presidency of this House is being treated as a negotiation chip in old-school, back-room Council negotiations. This is not the signal we need to send to the citizens!

There can be no doubt, the European Union is more important than ever. In the wake of climate crisis, growing social inequalities and international confrontation, we need more Europe, more than ever. But as EU institutions, we haven't always been very successful in reaching out to the citizens and convincing them that we are actually working for them, addressing the issues that are most important to them. And as President, I want to renew that trust, and I want to make sure that the European Parliament is the space where citizens are discussing. In the past years, we have been having debates on the future of Europe with heads of state and government, with presidents and so on. It was very interesting, but why not now change the direction and say, we open the House, we discuss the future of the European Union with the citizens, with the civil society, with the people that shape our continent today!

In the Parliament, we clearly defend human rights, democracy and the rule of law. As Parliament President, I want to be the ambassador for exactly those values and principles. In order to be credible as an institution, we need to make always sure that in everyday work we are fulfilling the principles that we ask others to fulfil. Be it transparency, be it in gender equality, be it inclusion, workers' rights and also reducing our ecological footprint.

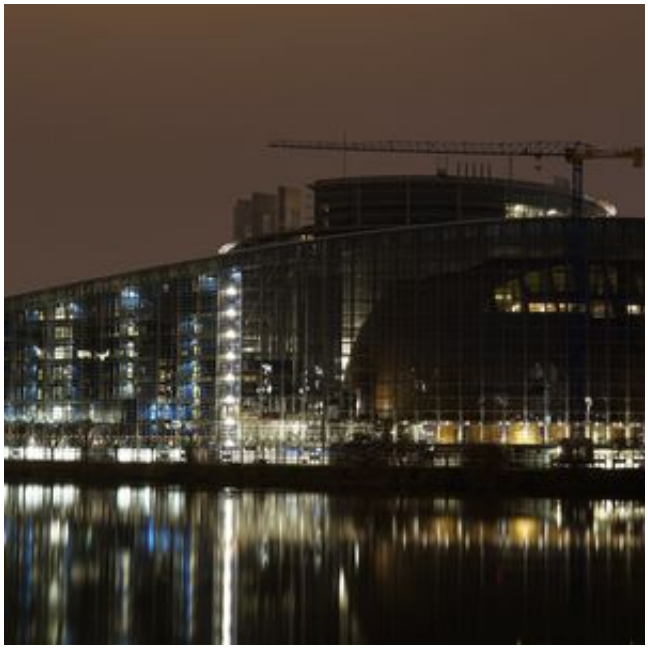
Dear colleagues, the European Union is the biggest historic achievement of our continent. It has ensured peace, friendship, and prosperity on a continent that used to be dominated by war and hatred. As elected members of the European Parliament, we have a shared responsibility to honour and to defend this historic achievement that we have inherited. I was born in a country that was divided by the Iron Curtain. I have lived on the border between Poland and Germany. I have seen myself what it means when Europe brings people together, when Europe overcomes borders, in the minds and on the grounds. And I see also for myself a personal responsibility to defend that European heritage.

In order to defend Europe, we also need to show the courage to change it for the better. As the only directly elected EU institution, the European Parliament has a key role in doing this leap forward. This House has been for many years fighting to defend and increase our rights as Parliament because that means increasing the rights and representation of the citizens, the citizens who elect us, who send us to this chamber. To continue this work of parliamentary rights, I put forward my candidature today for the honour of chairing this Parliament and I would be grateful for your support. Thank you so much.

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Ska Keller

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