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Position Paper | 21.03.2023

A transition that works for all the people

Position paper

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Executive Summary

We in the Greens EFA Group in the European Parliament firmly believe that **a transition to ecological sustainability must go hand in hand with social justice**, as they are not only vital to human prosperity, but complement and reinforce one another.

To that end, we aim to expand the European Green Deal. In addition to environmental commitments and objectives, we demand that it also covers social commitments to make the economic transition work for, and not in spite of, each and every person in Europe.

To meet this millennial challenge, we take inspiration from one of Europe's biggest success stories: the social welfare state and the social contract that underpins it. This contract has been broken by an ecologically ruinous and overly financialised approach to economic policy.

In its place, we propose **a true EU Green and Social Deal** with a new and equitable social contract that would make **achieving the primary aim of the EU - "... to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples" its highest priority**.

Our political goal is to translate this new social contract into **a binding commitment of the EU institutions and Member States to ensuring that all policies respect planetary boundaries and an upward convergence towards a minimum level of well-being** for people throughout the Union.

This paper explains in detail which areas need change and what needs to be done. It is composed of two parts. On the one hand, we flesh out **how the ecological transition can be used to bring about social and economic justice**: on energy, agriculture, transport and more.

As we are conscious of the fact that environmental policy changes alone will not deliver on social justice, the paper also focuses on the **key socio-economic changes that are indispensable for a Green and Social Deal**. They are the bedrock of well-being for all.

To make the economy serve the people and the planet instead of the other way round, we will need to abandon our obsession with GDP growth. Consequently, EU fiscal and economic policy needs reform in order to prioritise social and environmental sustainability.

We then argue that the Just Transition requires a tax shift from wages to wealth. We also advocate for the right incentives needed for long term investments in the real economy. The post-pandemic response of the EU showed that so much can be achieved when decision makers act in solidarity, but we still have a long way to go.

We dedicate attention to the need to quickly shift the massive amount of subsidies going to big polluters towards the most vulnerable groups and the industries that need it most. We also argue that new jobs should be more than green: they should be decent, well-paid jobs.

To make these societal shifts, proactive and constructive involvement of social partners, stakeholders and citizens is essential. They should be governed by Just Transition plans at every level, with maximisation of local benefits and optimal use of public procurement.

Finally, we make the case that **the Just Transition we fight for does not stop at the EU's borders**, that it serves a broader agenda of **global environmental justice** including gender equality and vulnerable groups, and that our environmental and democratic rights are actually enforceable.

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