

What should the Europe in which we want to live in

Promoting the ecological, social and democratic modernization of the European Union!

Main topics from the Mouvement Ecologique for the EU-elections 2019



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écologique**

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EU-ELECTIONS

2019

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EU-Wahlen 2019



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What should the Europe in which we want to live in tomorrow look like?

Promoting the ecological, social and democratic modernization of the European Union!

Rarely ever before has there been so many people as today becoming aware that the European Union is facing tremendous fundamental issues in its development process: Will the EU succeed in developing into a community of values, a community that places its focus on democracy, on social justice, on maintaining our natural livelihoods, on fair world trade conditions? Or do we consolidate an EU that is developing at the expense of the countries in the southern hemisphere, that overexploits our planets resources, that is showing great deficits on a democratic level and that favours neo-liberal economic views rather than general public interests and common good?

Moreover, the enormous challenges of our age can only be tackled and resolved jointly by all member states. Key words are: destruction of livelihoods, biodiversity loss, climate change, migration issues, social inequalities as a consequence, among other things, of today's economic and social politics.

That is why the question is not, "Do we want more or less Europe?" – but: "What should the Europe in which we want to live in tomorrow look like?"

At EU level, as in Luxembourg itself, it's ultimately our social and economic model that is up for debate.

*"A society of freedom and solidarity, as well as a liveable, intact environment, have the potential to become the unifying element for a Europe that is democratic and fit for future (...)
Over the next five years, the EU must initiate and promote environmental, social and political transformation. The EU needs a sustainable energy and mobility transition, a*

consistent decarbonization of its industry as well as a fundamental reorientation of its agricultural policy, supported by an offensive in the field of protection of nature and species. According to the Deutsche Naturschutzring – with reference to the introduction of its demands in the context of the European elections, and in this supported by more than 90 environmental, Third World, agricultural and socio-political organizations - "the aim is to use significantly less energy, resources and land and to preserve our natural resources here and worldwide."

What direction will the EU go, e.g. in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)?

What will be the EU 's choice in the forthcoming regulatory debate on multinational companies, in the strategic orientation of Free Trade Agreements or in the revision of the Water Framework Directive?

The list of examples could be extended forever and shows that it will be up to the coming EU Parliament to establish what shape the EU's fundamental orientation should take, in the spirit of a community of values and in the sense of sustainable development. Ultimately, such an approach is suited, among other things, to help discouraging populist tendencies.

Mouvement Ecologique expects the Luxembourgish parties to stand up for environmental and social justice, for respect of the rule of law, for equality and solidarity as guiding principles, unreservedly, and without getting lost in everyday pragmatism or subject to supposed short-term constraints.

EU elections 2019:

**making a more sustainable, a more ecological,
a more social and a more democratic Europe!**

Mission statements for the future of EU politics

1. Promoting a vibrant sustainable development: establishing the preservation of our ecosystems and livelihoods as a central mission statement

The EU's guideline in all decisions must be the preservation of our natural livelihoods - biodiversity, air, water, soil, climate as well as the protection of our resources! In doing so, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must provide the further basis for the future of Europe and be consistently implemented. These should not only be considered whilst taking political decisions within the EU itself, but also in the field of international relations and agreements.



The sustainable development and the natural livelihoods must therefore be consolidated as an overarching and prior ranking guiding principle of the EU!

2. For a strong social Europe

The European Social Model should increasingly provide comprehensive and fair protection for all citizens, while alleviating poverty and providing everyone with the opportunity to develop. Decent work, adequate income and social security, reducing the gap between the wealthy and the disadvantaged at both global and European level, access to the public health system and affordable housing for everyone, environmental justice, equal educational opportunities, gender equality, ... amongst other topics, must shape the priorities of the EU to a much greater extent in the future.



3. Making EU structures more democratic and creating transparency-building a real Europe of citizens

To many citizens EU decision-making processes appear to be undemocratic. Often, for instance, the EU Commission is looked upon as an untransparent panel deciding over people's heads. We need a European Union that is democratic and tangible to all EU citizens with both transparent and comprehensible decision-making processes and structures. Council and parliamentary sessions, for example, must be able to be followed by the public. Lobbying needs to be disclosed and regulated - not just through a binding register.

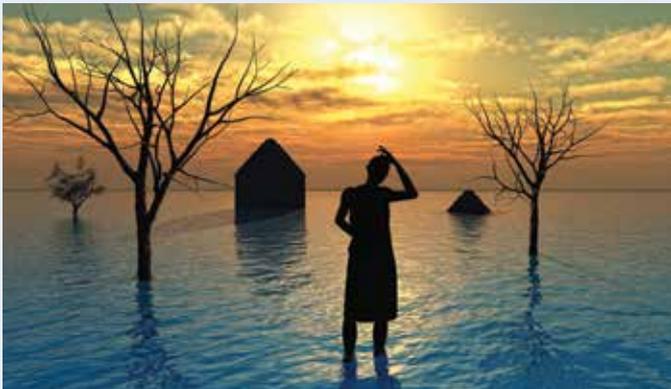
Citizens need to be granted more information and participation rights, at all levels. We need to create a participatory EU that ensures the right to information, fully implements the requirements of the Aarhus Convention on early citizens' and association participation in the environmental field, and improves the possibilities of recourse against decisions,



This would strengthen the legitimacy of the EU, ensure a more balanced commitment of stakeholder groups and reduce conflicts of interest.

4. Reforming the economic model in respect of the planet's borders

At EU level in particular, the maxim of infinite economic growth on a limited planet still applies. Today's economic model is linked to both deregulation, exploitation of the Third World, loss of our livelihoods, social tensions, and so on. We urgently need a European economic model that decouples itself from the dogma of growth, that strongly focuses on people's well-being and does not pursue a deregulated globalization and an increase of business profits as primary guideline.



We need an economic model that takes into account the limits of the resilience of the planet and primarily serves the welfare of the people. In this context, the requirements are, amongst others: creation of a GNP that measures social welfare (PIB du bien-être), promotion of public interest initiatives, implementation of a sustainable tax reform, consistent guarantee of a circular economy, significant reduction of resource consumption through avoidance, recycling and repairing as key objectives, prohibition of "obsolescence", promotion of the common good, and so on.

It is necessary to create a policy framework for digitization, including at EU level, to ensure that digitization does not increase consumption, energy hunger, but is more in the service of resource protection. Moreover, concrete data protection measures should be taken.

5. Sufficiency and sustainable lifestyle as social ideal

Still, there is no getting away from questioning our lifestyle and the fundamental orientation of our economic system towards a constant increase in consumption and productivity, due to the negative consequences they entail. THE focus must be on the common good - while respecting distributional justice - and not a constant increase in material goods.

In addition to promoting the technical increase in efficiency as a contribution to solving the environmental and climate issues, it is crucial to concentrate more on sufficiency and on longevity. It is our mission, including the EU, to support



new life models, public interest initiatives, regionality at both national and cross-border level, new working-time models, amongst others. This can be done by introducing appropriate support measures, by integrating these principles into existing EU-Directives and by adopting specific Directives.

6. Funding the EU budget by following sustainability goals

The current EU budget is largely at odds with EU and international objectives with regard to sustainability, climate and environmental protection. Today's fiscal policy does not ensure the necessary transformation in order to strengthen climate and environmental priorities after 2020.

The EU budget should promote sustainability, economic justice and prosperity, as a framework for sectoral decision-making, through increased investment in social infrastructure, education, culture, climate protection, biodiversity, social justice,



Among other things, a multi-annual financial framework (MFF) for projects in the interest of sustainable development is required. To that effect, environmental and climate-damaging subsidies must be consistently abolished, existing subsidy practices must be reoriented in that spirit (e.g. at the level of agricultural policy).

7. Establishing the preservation of biodiversity as an absolute priority

Today, we are aware of a loss of biodiversity of dramatic proportions, especially in terms of insect death. As important as the Conservation Directives adopted so far at EU level have been, they are far from being sufficient in order to put an

end to this loss of our livelihoods. In order to protect these, a far-reaching reform of the Common Agricultural Policy is imperative, a strong reduction or medium-term ban on pesticides, but also an enhanced strategy for the conservation of biodiversity, a targeted offensive to insect protection, a far more extensive funding for biodiversity conservation, the consistent punishment of infringements, a targeted species protection (bird protection, protection of predators, prevention of wildlife trade) and a stop of the alarming forest loss are equally crucial.



With the Water Framework Directive, the EU has undoubtedly set new accents in terms of water protection. It is important to reinforce these accents with the fitness check, when it comes to evaluate this very important Directive, in order to ensure that this vital resource is finally adequately protected.

8. Agricultural policy: away from the world market - towards sustainable forms of production

The dramatic loss of biodiversity comes with an increasing disappearance of farms. In order to counteract both phenomenon, there is no way around a fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

We need to move away from an agricultural policy that is primarily global market-oriented, towards a progressive food sovereignty, towards a promotion of an organic, environmentally- and animal-friendly agriculture with regional farming and regional value chains as well as structurally rich agricultural landscapes. Minimum environmental standards must apply: the protection of biodiversity must be strengthened, water and soil protection must be recognized as priority issues, soil protection must be guaranteed and energy and climate targets - in line with the Paris Agreement on Climate change – must be recognized.



Among other things, the following basic orientation applies: "Public money for public services, instead of lump sum premiums."

9. Making climate protection the measure of all politics

With the Paris Agreement on Climate change, Europe has pledged to make its fair contribution to limiting global temperature rise to 1.5° Celsius. This means that, by the middle of the century at the latest - whereas 2040 would have been more appropriate considering the challenges -, the EU must have achieved full decarbonization of all sectors (economy, transport, housing, trade ...).

The exit from fossil energy must hence be made quickly: energy efficiency must be strengthened; energy savings must be achieved and the share of renewable energies must be consistently increased. It is therefore crucial to make a definitive move away from non-viable technologies, unsustainable bioenergy and nuclear power.



The special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) clearly showed that the current European policy DOES NOT live up to the Paris' objectives. Climate protection needs fundamental, economic and social changes, as well as accompanying social and regulatory measures. Moreover, the time frame in which there is a need to act profoundly, is extremely tight. According to the IPCC report, we have less than 10 years to avoid a climate collapse.

In doing so, we must continue to oppose nuclear energy – a high risk technology that must not be seen as an alleged solution for effectively dealing with climate problems.

10. Ensuring environmental and health protection

It is estimated that global costs due to the harmful effects of chemicals are more than 10% of GDP (Global gross Domestic product). At the same time, more than 430,000 people are expected to die early each year across the EU due to air pollution.

What is urgently needed is a European strategy for a non-toxic environment, which can also serve as an impetus for similar developments in other regions of the world.



At EU level, an ambitious 8th Environmental Action Program and its implementation must be ensured, including the adoption of stricter standards in the context of the fitness check of the Air Quality Directive, as well as a much more dynamic and more health-oriented continuation and, above all, implementation of the REACH Regulation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals).

11. Guaranteeing a sustainable mobility change

The considerable mobility problems that arise today do also result from a rampant globalization process that entails an unacceptable transport volume, a "just in time" characterized economic logic, which in some cases leads to socially problematic working conditions in the transport sector. Similarly, the rapidly increasing air traffic is leading to a dead end. This both from a transport policy perspective and an environmental-, health- and climate protection-related point of view. A radical change is therefore required!



This change demands, among other things, a shift in European investment policy away from environmentally and economically questionable road projects towards a consistent expansion of rail infrastructures and waterways, a shift in freight transport to the rail, stricter limit values for trucks and cars, and the introduction of a kerosene tax up to significant efforts to curb air traffic.

12. Ensure research in the interest of the common good!

The (political) priorities set in research have a decisive impact on the future of our societies and our planet. The EU's research policy should contribute far more than it does today to making Europe and the world an environmentally sustainable, peaceful and healthy living space.

EU research should be characterized by democratic decision-making processes, it should be primarily at the service of the people and respect the borders of our planet. It should move away from highly growth-oriented, resource-intensive economic models. Similarly, the military and economic budgets must not be granted priority over social and environmental issues.



Research and innovation must focus on major challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, resource scarcity and social justice.

Accordingly, all investments and support measures in favour of nuclear power projects (including ITER) must be rejected! Research funds must not be invested in such risk technologies, but must be channelled into future-oriented, renewable energy sources or climate protection.

13. Reforming trade agreements

The reorganization of world trade should be shaped by fair, social, environmental and democratic criteria rather than by a neoliberal trade policy. Above all, it is important to put an end to the overexploitation of the so-called Third World through free trade agreements.

Trade agreements should confer a benefit to all the people, employees and medium-sized enterprises. Trade and investment agreements must focus primarily on the well-being and interests of the general public - and not, for instance, on reducing costs or other burdens faced by enterprises.



The Paris Climate Agreement, the precautionary principle, the avoidance of environmental degradation and non-harm provisions should be laid down - as should social standards - e.g.,

with legally binding and enforceable chapters on sustainable development. Arbitration courts, which represent a kind of parallel justice system, as well as existing special privileges or preferential rights for investors, should be abolished.

Existing agreements must be amended in accordance with these principles - new agreements must necessarily take them into account.

14. The European Union as peace-builder

The current European and global military rearmament risks to challenge the security architecture that has secured peace in recent decades, also for Luxembourg.

Mouvement Ecologique supports a policy that relies on civilian solutions and combats causes of migration rather than

migrants; a policy that seeks fair trade relations rather than war, violence, hunger and economic exploitation, ... and calls for participation in the 2019 Easter March.



Luxembourg's role in the European Union

In two months' time, elections will be held at EU level, and unfortunately, neither are the whole party programs available nor has a public debate taken place so far.

Regrettably, this highly unsatisfactory theming of EU policy however is in line with today's political reality. It is true that the viewpoint of the Luxembourg Government and various Ministries on relevant EU issues at EU level is rarely discussed publicly beforehand. In fact, it is often not even known what position has been taken on the Luxembourg side. Even the Chamber of Deputies is ultimately only occasionally involved with EU matters, although a little more often nowadays than in the past!

The same applies to the voting behaviour of members of the European Parliament on important votes in Parliament. This voting behaviour hardly trickles through to the public.

EU policy is at most an issue in Luxembourg on financial or tax matters, but even then, there is no contradictory debate either. One gains the (probably justified) impression that Luxembourg would be less in favour of a forward-looking policy and more likely to speak up when it is necessary to defend certain privileges or counter potential negative effects on our country. For instance, regarding the introduction of a financial and transaction tax, Luxembourg is holding back. Also, in the course of the discussion on taxation of digital businesses, Luxembourg has long been rather negative and is not exactly a driving player at the moment. When it comes to such important decision taking on future-oriented issues, - from Mouvement Ecologique's point of view - curbing or simply waiting unfortunately summarizes the inglorious attitude of Luxembourg (however with the important exception of addressing climate strategies).

Our country likes to point out that such actions are better located at OECD level, which is certainly true. But everyone knows they will then be put off indefinitely and will probably never be taken in some cases.

So, the question that arises is: which side will Luxembourg be on in the forthcoming years? The one of the supporters of a "continue as before attitude", or the side of the fervent advocates of a democratic, social and environmental transformation of the European Union?

Note: the members of the European Parliament are called upon - but so are the political parties!

Mouvement Ecologique's suggestions for the 2019 European Elections are aimed primarily at the political parties, beyond the candidates. Mouvement Ecologique believes that the parties in particular have to state their position in much clearer terms regarding EU policy. It is highly unacceptable that MEPs are sometimes seen as "free electrons" and vote virtually apart from political orientations of their own party. Therefore, Mouvement Ecologique expects far clearer statements from the various parties on relevant votes in Parliament throughout the coming Parliamentary term!