



# Europe

## European Monetary Union

(Originally passed – Spring 1998 Conference)

### Economic Arguments

The Green Party agrees that low interest rates and price stability are worthwhile goals. The Green Party is not opposed in principle to measures which might reduce or eliminate currency exchange costs and exchange rate uncertainty. We support the principle of economic co-operation between nations and eschew competition whether in the form of devaluation, low taxation, or poor social or environmental standards.

We oppose the European Single Market and any centralisation of economic decision making which cannot be shown to bring overriding benefits. We do not believe there is any need to promote more trade between EU member states: much of the current trade is unnecessary and should be reduced. We oppose the monetarist nature of the Maastricht convergence criteria and the Stability Pact.

### Political Arguments

We oppose the creation of a unitary state of Europe, as opposed to a decentralised federal or confederal structure. A single currency would be a necessary condition for the former but not for the latter.

We are opposed to the creation of a European Central Bank. We believe the current institutions of the EU incapable of providing the necessary democratic control, not least because of the inertia resulting from the requirements for unanimity and qualified majority. We believe that if the EU is to have a currency and an

economic policy, it must be possible for the people of the EU to change it as the result of an election. Whilst the Green Party will oppose EMU, if the EU does introduce a Single Currency and Economic Policy, we will campaign for the maximum level of democratic control by the people as possible, with the ECB being responsible to the European Parliament.

### Conclusions

We oppose EMU on both political and economic grounds because its primary aim is to facilitate the European Single Market, largely for the benefit of transnational corporations. This will increase unsustainable trade patterns and thus further undermine small businesses and local economies. We believe that the UK should not enter any Single Currency without a referendum, and we believe that no politician should be bound by a party line in any such referendum.

However, we are not committed in principle to defending the pound. We seek to encourage local exchange systems as a viable alternative in order to build self-empowered communities.

The Green Party will campaign vigorously for a positive “No” and will distance itself from any jingoistic or nationalistic tendencies within other “No” campaigns.

## Resignation of the President and Members of the European Commission

(Originally passed – Spring 1999 Conference)

Conference notes:

- the resignation of the President and the members of the European Commission following the report of the Independent Experts regarding fraud and mismanagement,
- the consistent campaigning of the Green Group in the European Parliament regarding their suspicions of mismanagement in the Commission, but also of abuse of funds by the Parliament,
- the reluctance of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament to uncover the misdeeds of Commission officers, and in particular the original support of its leader Pauline Green for the continuation in office of the Commission, (1)
- the enthusiasm of the British Conservatives in the European Parliament to expose the Commission, only shortly after they themselves vehemently supported keeping travel expenses regulations which enable dishonest MEPs to defraud the taxpayer by claiming maximum travel costs whether incurred or not,
- that less than 20% of all EU funds are managed by the EU institution, while 80% is managed by the member states.

Conference therefore proposes that this opportunity be seized:

- to dramatically revise the structure of the Commission, by making all its staff accountable, including Directors General, and their work transparent e.g. by establishing a line management which clearly shows tasks and responsibilities,
- to democratise all the institutions of the EU, especially to create a better balance between the relative powers of the Council, the Parliament and the Commission
- to audit the use of EU funds by and within the member states to

ensure that fraud is not also taking place at the national level, and the make public the auditors' findings.

Conference demands:

- that member governments replace the entire Commission with credible individuals, who are not ex-politicians now superfluous on the national stage, but are already competent in the subject area of their portfolio,
  - that the European Parliament be able to use the powers they are entitled to by the terms of the Amsterdam Treaty to scrutinise the proposed new President and Commissioners and possibly reject them individually or collectively,
  - that there be established without delay an independent anti-fraud office with sweeping powers to investigate fraud at all levels of the EU,
  - that a 'Whistleblowers Act' be introduced for all EU officials, and that the official whose conscientious action made possible the present opportunity be immediately reinstated and compensated
  - that Green Party Executive convey the opinion of Conference to the British Government, MEPs and other relevant bodies."
- (1) 'My Group will be voting to give confidence to the European Commission to continue their work over the next year'. 17 Dec 1998

## **Green Party position on an EU-wide Green Party**

(Originally passed – Autumn Conference 2002)

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Conference resolves that:

1. The Green Party of England & Wales recognises the value of political parties across Europe, who share common principles and aims, coming together as a federation to help advance those aims. We also recognise that any such federation needs to accommodate the diversity of circumstances across Europe.

Member parties in such a federation will often have different views and policies on particular issues. This diversity reflects and ecological principle, and should be welcomed, rather than suppressed.

2. Proposals in the Treaty of Nice to create pan-EU political parties are neither in the best interests of democracy as a whole nor those of Green politics in particular. Such parties would be very distant from the citizens they seek to represent. Such a system would be less able to represent regional and national variations in circumstances, views and policies. The idea that voters in future EU elections should be required to cast some of their votes for such distant EU-wide party lists would further disenfranchise electorates already disillusioned with the EU project.

3. For the Green Party of England & Wales, such a move would be highly problematic. Significant policy differences with some of our European colleagues in recent times have shown the need to be able to distinguish between our party's views and policies, and others being advocated in the name of Green politics in some other European countries. For example, we oppose any militarisation of the EU, as is being pursued through the EU CFSP, CESDP and Rapid Reaction Force, are against UK adoption of the euro as weakening regional and local economies to the benefit of transnational banks and corporations, and seek an end to the EU Common Fisheries Policy which has wrecked fisheries around Britain.

4. An EU-wide Green Party itself contesting the EU Parliament elections would seek a common policy platform for its candidates. On past experience this would include policies which The Green Party of England & Wales does not support, and indeed actively opposes. Voters in England & Wales would be faced with The Green Party advocating one policy platform, with a list of Green candidates supporting that, and an EU-wide Green Party promoting a

conflicting set of views. This would make it impossible to avoid confusing the electorate. It would damage The Green Party's chances of putting across a clear agenda of our choice and of maximising electoral support for that agenda.

5. The Green Party of England & Wales recognises that changes in the rules regarding the funding of political parties in the EU will require organisational changes within the European Federation of Green Parties and the Green Group in the EU Parliament. We feel that the changes made should be those necessary to ensure compliance with the new rules, without radically altering the nature of either body. In particular, it is essential that the Federation retains its federal character, and is able to accommodate the diversity of policies among its member parties. We would oppose proposals for an EU-wide Green Party which failed to meet those needs.

6. The Green Party of England & Wales opposes proposals that elections to the EU Parliament should use a system of EU-wide party lists. Such a system cannot meet the democratic needs of the electorate or individual Green Parties.

7. The Party Executive, and in particular its International Co-ordinator and Committee, are instructed to:

- i) Write to the Government to inform them of our views of the proposal of EU-wide parties and EU-wide party lists, and urge that they do everything they can to stop that proposal being implemented.
- ii) Write to other political parties within the UK who may also find the proposal similarly problematic (particularly parties seeking to represent the smaller nations and regions of the UK) to seek common ground between us on which we can oppose the proposal together.
- iii) Propose to sister parties in the European Federation of Green

Parties that any EU-wide Green Party should be within the Federation, but that the Federation should extend beyond it to accommodate other Green Parties not in that EU-wide party because their countries are not in the EU or they have chosen not to be in that party. We need to ensure there is a meaningful place not only for our party but for such colleagues as Miljøpartiet de Grønne, among our neighbours in Norway, who have twice voted not to join the EU.

iv) Attempt to ensure that any common policy platform for an EU-wide Green Party is as consensual as possible within the Green Parties across the EU, so that those who hold minority views within the Federation do not feel that they are being suppressed by the majority, and to avoid conflicting platforms between national Green Parties and the EU-wide Green Party.

## **Support for referendum on EU Constitution**

(Policy Statement passed – Autumn Conference 2003)

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The Green Party supports a referendum on the European Union Constitution. This Conference calls upon the Green Party Executive to communicate this to the Government and the media.

## **The proposed EU constitutional treaty**

(Policy Statement agreed by Green Party Regional Council, July 2004)

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1. This Policy Statement sets in context and applies The Green Party's agreed policy for Europe in MfSS to the "treaty establishing a constitution for Europe" [the European Union] proposed by the EU summit at the end of June 2004.

2. It notes that The Green Party is in favour of fundamental reform of the EU, including a constitutional

treaty. It compares the current proposal with the party's policy on what should be in such a constitutional treaty, and the proposal's content with the party's policy on the same points. It assesses whether, as a whole, the current proposal offers progress towards our Green vision of Europe, or would be a greater obstacle to that than present arrangements.

3. The Green Party recognises "the value of the original goal of the founders of the European Communities, who sought to remove the threat of another war between European states. This has been distorted by vested political and economic interests into a European Union dominated by economic interests, which lacks democratic control, and promotes the goals of multinational corporations, not of people." [MfSS EU101]

4. The Green Party is committed to fundamental reform of the EU on Green lines. We share the objectives, stated by the EU summit at Laeken which launched the constitutional treaty project, that it should improve the quality of life of all in Europe and bring the EU closer to citizens.

5. The Green Party supports the idea of "an international European treaty to set out the competencies, powers and structures" of the EU - a constitutional treaty. To adopt such a fundamental treaty should require the agreement of the people in each member country, expressed by a majority of those voting in a referendum. [MfSS EU351-3]

6. We believe that such a constitutional treaty should be a relatively short, straightforward document, as envisaged by the EU summit in Laeken. The present EU proposal goes into far too much detail, including policies which have no place in a constitution. The huge Section III of the constitution set out in the proposed treaty would set in stone policies which are now or may become unsuited to the circumstances and

development of the EU. It would prove a major obstacle to necessary reform.

7. The Green Party welcomes the inclusion of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU constitution proposed in this treaty, which should improve the application of such in EU institutions. We regret that provisions in the proposal restrict the application of rights in member countries, and that the Charter will not have effect there except where introduced by specific legislation.

8. The Green Party is concerned that key provisions in the EU constitution proposed in this treaty and assumptions underlying its content are contrary to the Green vision and policies for Europe. They contradict and would preclude the introduction of Green policies. To open the way would require

laborious amendment of the constitution on each occasion. We are particularly concerned about economics and peace, among other issues.

9. Neo-liberal economics and globalisation are not reconcilable with Green principles, nor with our vision of a Green Europe committed to social justice and an ecologically sustainable future.

10. The constitution proposed in this treaty prioritises and sets in stone a commitment to economic policies based on neo-liberal economics and globalisation. These policies include the single market, trade liberalisation and a commitment to monetary economics and the euro. Such policies work against local and regional economies, damage public services through imposed spending cuts and privatisation, and undermine local standards to protect the environment, natural resources, and people's living and working conditions. As an example, the proposed commitment to price stability would be a barrier to the introduction of measures intended

to reflect the true ecological costs of activities such as air transport.

11. The constitution proposed in this treaty would increase yet further the development of the EU as a military power. The proposal envisages the EU as a European NATO, with its own army, the Rapid Reaction Force, command, intelligence etc. That would lead to increased military expenditure to provide those. It would promote an expanded EU arms industry. The Green Party rejects the creation of a European military power.

12. The Green Party calls not for collective security arrangements which can spread and promote war, but for common security leading to peace for all. Our policies oppose militarisation of the EU, and oppose its Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policies which the constitution proposed in this treaty would set in stone as the basis of that. We prefer the alternative potential to develop peacekeeping and civil assistance.

13. The constitution proposed in this treaty does not take the overdue opportunity to end the EU's Euratom Treaty commitment to the development of nuclear power. That treaty is not to be included in the proposed constitution, but is still there as a protocol.

14. The proposed arrangements for developing the ways in which the EU works are a mixed bag, and less than satisfactory. While we welcome the extension of the EU Parliament's role through co-decision on issues decided by qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers, the provisions for protecting the rights of member countries are inadequate. As one example, it is unjust and simply wrong that the EU Commission should be judge and jury in its own cause in questions of subsidiarity, a Green principle.

15. For these and other reasons The Green Party, while supporting

the idea of a written constitution for Europe, believes that the current draft has a long way to go before it is acceptable. As it stands, it would not be a step forward to a Green Europe, but an increased obstacle to that.

## **The proposed EU constitutional treaty**

(Policy Statement passed – Autumn Conference 2004)

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A. Conference notes that:

1. A "treaty establishing a constitution for Europe" [the European Union] has been proposed by the EU summit at the end of June 2004 for ratification by the member countries, and that there will be a referendum in the UK and many of the other countries. The Green Party needs to agree a position from which to campaign, and to agree its plans to campaign in that referendum.

2. The Green Party advocates fundamental reform of the EU. Our policy for Europe supports the idea of "an international European treaty to set out the competencies, powers and structures" of the EU. Our policy sets out a range of competencies which need to be addressed at the European level. We believe that the EU has taken too many powers for itself, many dealing with matters better handled at national, regional and local levels.

3. Such a constitutional treaty should be a relatively short, straightforward document, as envisaged by the EU summit in Laeken which began the current process. However, the constitution and treaty now proposed by the EU summit in Brussels in June 2004 goes into far too much detail. It includes policies which have no place in a constitution. The huge Section III of the proposed constitution would set in stone policies which are now or may become unsuited to the circumstances and development of the EU. It would prove a major obstacle to necessary reform.

4. The proposed treaty would offer benefits, such as inclusion of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the constitution and some democratisation of the EU's central institutions.

5. However, key provisions in the EU constitution proposed in this treaty contradict and would preclude the introduction of the Green policies for Europe agreed by Conference. Were this proposed treaty and constitution to be accepted, to open the way for progress would require laborious amendment of the constitution on issue after issue.

6. The proposed treaty contains too much which would prevent progress to an ecologically sustainable future for Europe based on peace, social justice and democracy. Examples of such which the proposed treaty and constitution would set in stone are:

- its commitment to neo-liberal economics and globalisation,
- its determination to develop the EU into a military power through its Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policies,
- its refusal to renounce nuclear power, and inclusion of the Euratom Treaty as a protocol,
- a system of centralisation in which questions of subsidiarity are decided by the EU Commission acting as judge and jury in its own cause, and numerous more detailed policies to which The Green Party is opposed, such as the Common Fisheries Policy and Common Agricultural Policy.

7. In July GPRC unanimously adopted a Policy Statement based on our policy agreed by Conference, which concluded that "the current [proposed treaty and constitution] has a long way to go before it is acceptable. As it stands, it would not be a step forward to a Green Europe, but an increased obstacle to that."

8. The political terms of the public debate over the EU constitution have frequently been reduced to a debate between a 'pro EU' position in favour of the constitution and

an 'anti EU' position opposed to the constitution. The anti constitution position has been dominated by nationalistic, xenophobic and right wing perspectives and values (as exemplified by the BNP, UKIP and the Tories) which are fundamentally at odds with progressive Green politics, and which the Green Party must demonstrate significant political distance from when addressing the EU constitution question.

B. Conference therefore

9. Decides that in the referendum campaign The Green Party will emphasise its distinctive policies for a Green Europe, an ecologically sustainable future with peace, democracy and social justice;

10. Instructs the Executive to seek help from and co-operation with groups campaigning on the EU's proposed treaty and constitution with whom The Green Party shares views on particular issues therein.

11. Notes the Executive's request that our International Committee prepare a short outline of a Green constitutional treaty for Europe, based on the policies agreed by Conference, as an illustration to support the party's campaigning.

12. Notes the conclusion in GPRC's policy statement that the EU summit's proposed treaty and constitution are not acceptable as they stand, endorses that conclusion, and agrees that The Green Party will campaign for a "no" vote in the referendum.

13. Recognises that in a broad party such as The Green Party there are likely to be some members and representatives who cannot entirely share that conclusion. Conference asks that representatives of the party do not campaign publicly against The Green Party's agreed position.

14. Recognises that when UK legislation is agreed for the referendum, it is likely to include

provision for umbrella "yes" and "no" campaigns. Conference appreciates the importance of taking all suitable opportunities to participate in the debate. Only thus can we ensure that our arguments for a Green Europe are not obscured by other positions.

15. If umbrella campaigns are set up, agrees that The Green Party shall affiliate to the "no" campaign, to use the resources and opportunities it offers to promote The Green Party's policies for Europe, the strategy we have pursued in the "no euro" campaign.

## **Kurdish Rights in Turkey**

(Emergency motion passed – Autumn Conference 2005)

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Bearing in mind:

a. The political instability and growing violence in South East Turkey;

b. The Turkish Government's refusal to date effectively to implement measures to assure the Kurdish People in Turkey of their rights to use their language, express their culture and live in the domicile of their choice;

c. The continued imprisonment of Abdullah Ocalan under extremely harsh conditions despite the European Court of Human Right's ruling that his trial was unlawful;

The Green Party of England and Wales calls upon the Green/EFA group in the European Parliament to use the opportunity offered by the opening of accession talks with turkey to ensure that the Copenhagen criteria (which include the rights of ethnic minorities within the EU) are met by the Turkish government prior to accession to the EU.

The GPEW supports all appropriate moves towards peaceful resolution of the conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdish people in Turkey.