

**“it’s the economy,
stupid”**

The Green Party Manifesto for the
European Parliament elections 2009



contents

3	Introduction
4	The new reality: climate change, the economic crisis and crushing inequalities
4	Climate change
5	A crisis in society
6	The economic crisis
6	The Green New Deal
8	The Green New Deal - a new green and social economy
8	Regulation of banking and closing tax loopholes
11	Invest massively in renewable energy
12	Public transport
13	Right to rent and investment in public rented housing
14	Free insulation for homes, schools and hospitals
14	Green workforce training
15	Citizens' Pensions and free social care for older people
17	End poverty with the Citizens' Income
17	Invest in waste management
17	Fair trade not free trade
19	Rights for working people
19	Taxation
21	Local communities - the greening of everyday life
22	Crime, policing and law and order
23	Health
24	Food
25	Wildlife and Landscape
26	Citizens, government and the world - our place in wider communities
26	Human rights
28	Animal protection
28	EU government
29	The EU in the world
32	Conclusion

introduction

For three decades, the Green Party has led the way with policies to address the critical challenges facing Britain. Challenges ranging from the climate crisis to the current recession, from the deterioration of public transport to the erosion of standards in public services. The problems are interrelated, and so are the solutions. To meet these challenges effectively, we need to change the economy.

Decades of Labour and Tory governments have given us depleted and demoralised public services, communities under pressure, financial chaos, unemployment and environmental breakdown. All of these problems have been either caused or made worse by the way the economy has worked. From Thatcherism through the New Labour years, the ideology of privatisation and liberalisation has put private profit before the public good.

The other main parties in British politics keep repeating old mantras, employing old policy formulas, which have been shown not to work.

But here is an alternative: a Green New Deal, an approach to economic recovery that would put Britain firmly on the way to sustainable development, addressing the climate crisis, circumventing the peak oil problem, while improving community cohesion and fostering genuine accountability and democracy.

Across the country voters have already found out that the Green Party offers an attractive alternative to “politics as usual”. Greens are getting elected in increasing numbers - with around 120 principal authority councillors now.

The two existing Green Party MEPs, Caroline Lucas and Jean Lambert, have led the cause of fairness and sustainability in Brussels. Our London Assembly Members, Jenny Jones and Darren Johnson, have ensured huge investments

in communities and services and continued to vigorously defend these in the face of cuts imposed by the new Conservative mayor. In Scotland, Green Party MSPs have been just as effective.

These European elections are conducted under proportional representation, so every vote for a Green MEP will count. And throughout Britain, voters have learned that the only wasted vote is a vote you don't believe in.

The European Union will be part of our changing future. How it changes depends on individual votes in these elections. Do we want a Europe that puts the interests of people and planet first, or a Europe dominated by markets and multinationals? European policy on the economy, food and climate change will affect every life and every community. In the wider world, Europe has a decisive voice in rebuilding the economic and financial system, and in the vital environmental decisions that will be made in Copenhagen this year.

Britain is at a crossroads. Do you want business as usual? More financial chaos and environmental breakdown? Communities under pressure and growing inequality?

There is a positive and practical alternative. We can have a fairer society. We can have a sustainable economy. We can have better public services that are accountable to you the public.

Vote for the Green Party and together we will make it happen.

the new reality: climate change, the economic crisis and crushing inequalities

We face not one crisis but three. There is a crisis in the economy, a crisis in the environment, and a crisis in our society, which is increasingly divided by inequalities of income and opportunity.

The financial crisis, recession and economic hard times are obvious to everyone. Banks have had to be rescued, credit to small firms and home buyers has dried up, and unemployment has grown to over two million, bringing uncertainty and worry to millions of others. We all know it will be worse before it gets better.

Governments are clearly lost in these unprecedented times. The other main parties in British politics fail to see the need for a new vision for the future. They are also ignoring the other two, longer-term, crises of our time: climate change and the rising level of inequalities. "Solving" the credit crunch without fundamental reforms will simply make these worse. No economy can be based on such a socially and environmentally unjust footing. We cannot ignore the plight of billions of people in developing countries who are critically affected by all three crises.

Climate change

Grim as the financial crisis is, climate change remains the most serious challenge we face – a crisis that has arisen because the existing economic model relies on continually increasing, wasteful, unsatisfying consumption of the Earth's finite resources. If we can't address climate change, then our very existence may be at stake.

To avoid this we must make an urgent effort now to move to a low or zero carbon economy, making a far bigger and more significant effort than our Government or the EU presently contemplate.

The Labour government now proposes a target of reducing emissions by 80% by 2050, which works out at about 2.5% per annum. The EU has agreed to 20% by 2030, or 30% if other industrialised countries agree to make reductions. Neither target is adequate. Based on the latest scientific predictions, an industrialised country such as the UK needs to reduce emissions by 90% by 2030.

And we need a commitment to annual targets now, rather than aspirations for the distant future. The Green Party has calculated that the UK needs to be making reductions of around 10% per annum from now on.

Moreover, the richer industrialised countries do not need just to make large reductions themselves; through structures such as the EU they need to provide aid to developing countries to help them develop low-carbon economies.

This issue is crucial in these EU elections because the world is on the brink of negotiating a successor to the Kyoto protocol, which gave individual states climate change targets. Kyoto did not go far enough, and major countries, most notably the United States, did not sign up. With the new US administration, prospects for an improved treaty emerging from Copenhagen at the end of this year are better. But we need a strong Green group in the European Parliament to keep up the pressure on the EU delegation.

A crisis in society

Inequality in British society begins at, or even before, birth, with low birth weight and infant and child mortality significantly higher among economically disadvantaged groups. Around one in five children continue to live in low-income households. Children from these groups are less likely to complete GCSEs and A levels, and to attend universities.

Minority ethnic groups, lone parents, and people without formal qualifications have an unemployment rate of about double that for the total working-age population. The richest one per cent of households hold more than 20% of Britain's wealth. The gross inequalities continue throughout life, with around 25% of pensioners living in poverty, and significant disparities in life expectancy, particularly among men, associated with income.

This sample of the many measures available reflects the failure of successive governments to tackle the widening inequalities that are a direct product of an unjust economic system. A Social Europe, with strong policies on the economy, food

Why we need to reduce emissions at 10% per year rather than 2.5%

The concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere has risen from 270 parts per million (ppm) CO₂ in the 19th century to 430ppm CO₂ equivalent (that is including other greenhouse gases such as methane) today. The Government assumes that we should aim in the long run to stabilise the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at about 550ppm CO₂ equivalent. Its target of an 80% reduction by 2050 (or about 2.5% per year) is based on that.

But the government's own Stern Report (which summarises the scientific consensus) says that at that level of greenhouse gases there is a 75-99% chance (that is near certainty) of global warming exceeding 2°C. If that happens there is a high chance of runaway climate chaos.

We in the Green Party think it is both imprudent and immoral to knowingly accept that level of risk. Instead we should aim to stabilise the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere just a bit above the present level, say around 450 ppm. Most scientists agree with us. To achieve 450ppm, global emissions need to drop by as much as 60% as soon as 2030. And industrialised countries with high emissions, and overwhelmingly responsible for historical emissions, such as the UK, can both afford to, and need to, reduce their emissions rather faster, by 90% by 2030. That means an annual reduction of about 10% per year from now until 2030.

Figures from the Stern Report

and climate change can work to address these issues.

The problems are global, reflecting the crisis in the structure of the global economy. Inequality around the world has also continued to grow despite increasing overall prosperity. The richest 2% of adults in the world own more than half of all household wealth, while almost half the world — more than three billion people — live on less than \$2.50 a day. European policies, particularly on trade, can, as outlined below, have positive effects in beginning to address these issues.

The economic crisis

The economic system of Britain and the world has grown out of all proportion to the real economy beneath it. By building on borrowing and financial speculation, we undermined the foundation of the economy, leading to the current crisis.

The real economy has in turn lost touch with its environmental underpinnings. Casino capitalism has become more important than making things and providing services. Houses have become speculative investments instead of somewhere to live. And with this unbalanced approach has come the

increased inequality outlined above, with great poverty both in the developing world and for some in Europe, including the UK.

Moreover, the system has proved to be desperately unstable, and now we are plunged into a recession, where the miseries of unemployment and uncertainty will increase.

The answers to this crisis cannot be found by patching up the current inequitable, dangerously unbalanced system, but by redesigning the economic architecture to create good, sustainable jobs that create a fair, living wage, cracking down on tax evasion and creating mechanisms to prevent the generation of undue profits, particularly through financial speculation.

The Green New Deal

Facing these linked economic, environmental and social challenges requires courage and leadership, courage that the other political parties are not willing to show. A coherent set of policies is needed to address the current situation in concert — and this package exists in the form of the Green New Deal. Ever since coining the phrase with her colleagues in the Green New Deal Group of economists in the summer of 2008, Green MEP

Peak Oil

We use oil for nearly everything - as fuel for transport and heating, and as a feedstock for solvents, plastics, asphalt, pharmaceuticals and packaging. Oil is also vital for industrial agriculture, providing chemical fertilisers and treatments, fueling machinery, processing and food delivery.

But oil is a finite resource; there is only so much in the ground. One day it will run out. But our problems begin long before then. The global rate of oil production is about to reach a maximum, stay constant for a number of years, and then gradually decline. This peak and decline in oil production has already happened on a national scale in many countries, including the USA (1971) and in the UK (1999). The majority of predictions for the global peak fall between 2003 and 2015. Once demand for oil exceeds supply the price will go up and current economic models will be blown apart.

It's not just oil. We face the same problem with every finite resource that our economy exploits and then wastes, from fresh water to vital minerals. The timescales may vary, but overall we can't go on with the current economic model, which assumes an infinite supply of resources.

Caroline Lucas has led the way on this ground-breaking proposal. This approach is committed to social justice – not just to a Green New Deal but to a Social New Deal.

It took inspiration from President Roosevelt. When the world faced economic depression back in the early 1930s, it was Roosevelt's New Deal that

got people back to work with a massive investment in infrastructure. Today, as we stand on the brink of the triple crisis, we need another massive investment – not in roads and bridges this time, but in green, energy-efficient infrastructure which could create one million new jobs in the UK – a Green New Deal.

“None of the other parties has the vision or the courage to tackle the real challenges we face today – the accelerating climate crisis, the end of the age of cheap plentiful oil, an unstable economy teetering on the edge of total collapse, and Victorian levels of inequality running through it all. Britain and Europe need Green leadership now.”

Caroline Lucas MEP, Leader of the Green Party

the green new deal

The economy before 2009 depended on continuing but unsustainable economic growth. That growth has ended. Even the Government expects the UK economy to shrink by more than 3% in 2009. This is despite near-zero interest rates and the creation of new money (quantitative easing). The consequence if nothing is done will be at least a further million people in the UK out of work in 2009, bringing the total to three million. Many more will fear for their jobs. And many older people fear for their savings and pensions.

Unemployment and insecurity on this scale is unacceptable. It blights lives, destroys families and wrecks communities. Investment is required from governments now to ensure that we can build an economic system that delivers for people, but also operates within environmental limits. Stimulus on its own is not good enough – indiscriminate growth has left us with the three crises we now face. For this reason, we welcome the broad intent of the Commission's €200bn EU Recovery Plan, but believe that it is insufficient for the task, that it is ineffective against the far worse crisis emerging in Eastern Europe, and is not sufficiently environmentally and socially focused.

We don't want to restore growth-as-usual, as Europe's establishment parties, and in the UK Labour, Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, want to do, and as was proposed by the G20 nations when they met on 6 April. Nor do we endorse the cowardly response of the budget on 22 April, with very little further stimulus to create jobs, and only a tiny investment in a low carbon economy. We would use the fact that we need to create jobs urgently to begin the investment needed to transform the economy to a new green stable steady state and create many more jobs.

The Green New Deal

The Green New Deal contains elements that need action at a local or UK level, and some actions at European or even global level. But it is a single, coherent package: we would press for the UK aspects to be broadly applied by governments across Europe.

The total injection into the UK economy that it proposes is about £45Bn, or 3% of GDP. This is about the amount that the government expects the economy to shrink. This package would directly create one million jobs, and many more through indirect effects. It would lay the foundations for an environmentally sustainable economy and greater social justice. Concerted European action along these lines will be far more effective than action just in the UK.

Regulation of banking and closing tax loopholes

The explosion of debt and the multiplication of exotic financial instruments that led into the financial crisis have been disastrous for both our economy and our environment. The Green Party has been a rare voice of resistance to the madness of financial deregulation. We need to live within our means and put

The Green New Deal

An action plan to create jobs, beat the recession and create a new environmentally sustainable economy will:

- Regulate banking and close tax loopholes
- Invest massively in renewable energy and energy efficiency
- Invest in public transport and in waste management
- Create more affordable housing for rent
- Provide free insulation for homes, schools and hospitals
- Introduce Green workforce training
- Provide decent pensions and free social care for older people
- Reduce poverty massively by introducing a Citizen's Income

some reality back into banking. What is clearly required is a major programme of re-regulation at the European level; individual member states cannot effectively regulate what are largely multinational financial companies, while regulation at a global level, while desirable, is unlikely to be agreed upon quickly enough. This is exactly the sort of area where Europe must act by:

- Reforming European rules so that capital and exchange controls can be reintroduced;
- Introducing a Europe-wide tax (a 'Tobin Tax') on international capital transactions to curb speculators;
- Tightening the easy credit that allows speculators to multiply the size of their "bets" well beyond the cash required to cover them;
- Regulating banks to ensure rigorous capital requirements and limits to executive pay and bonuses;
- Regulating all financial instruments and practices (such as short selling) firmly and permitting only those that are transparent, that offer limited risk of

financial destabilisation and which are clearly beneficial;

- Co-ordinating action between the Bank of England and the European Central Bank to ensure interest rates remain low for green investment;

- Using European influence to tackle the loopholes that allow some £10 bn a year to be diverted from the UK tax system through the use of tax havens. Many of the tax havens are former European, or indeed UK colonies, or Crown Dependencies such as the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man;

- Using EU influence to ensure that the International Accounting Standards Board introduces standards that require that multinational companies report their performance on a country by country basis; and

- Taking the lead in international negotiations with the new US administration to reform the world financial system to put it on a fairer and more stable basis.

All this must complement tough action in the UK. We need to maintain low inflation, and also the ability to finance the Government's debt. We accept that it is appropriate, while inflation does not threaten, to undertake some 'quantitative easing' of the money supply.

We need to use the control now available through the partial nationalisation of some of the banks to ensure those institutions begin lending again in a sensible way, based on UK deposits and reserve ratios. This lending needs to be both to hard-pressed businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones, and for house purchases for those who can genuinely afford to borrow. But the lending must not fuel another housing bubble or an unsustainable consumer credit boom.

We must tighten up tax enforcement to collect the £12 bn avoided annually by the largest corporations and the £13 bn avoided each year by wealthy individuals. We need to retain the ability for the UK to continue to control its own monetary policy by not entering the Euro.

In the longer run we would seek radical change in the way banking operates; it needs to become the servant of the economy and society, not its master. We would encourage mutual institutions, more small local banks, democratically controlled, and fewer huge multinationals so that no single actor is 'too big to fail'.

We would introduce a fund of up to £1 bn to provide initial capital on a matched funding basis for new mutual and local institutions, including new building societies, mutual insurers and banks and credit unions. And we would provide new ways for pension funds and others to make safe investments in public projects

such as schools and hospitals, or in the emerging green economy (see 'How we would pay for the Green New Deal' below), rather than relying on the government's discredited Private Finance Initiative.

Beyond the financial sector we seek an economy where ownership is more closely connected with the business itself and the community in which it operates, and is not solely organised through a volatile capital market. Owners then are more likely to appreciate and be responsible for the social and environmental consequences of their business decisions. We will also promote co-operatives and other mutuals in all sectors, and favour the extension of employee share ownership schemes. We will argue for an EU statute for social enterprises and oppose proposals from the Commission to increase taxation on some co-operatives.

The role of the European Union

A fundamental tenet of Green politics is that decisions should be taken at the most appropriate local level; indeed we think many things dealt with at national level might better be decided regionally or more locally. So why bother with the European Union at all?

We Greens are internationalists; we want to foster solidarity between peoples, and we believe co-operation builds peace, as it has done in Europe. Our geography means that we are part of Europe. We believe in Europe, but not in a European super-state.

Our vision for Europe seeks to replace the unsustainable economics of free trade and growth with the alternative of local self-reliance. We want to foster co-operation on issues of common interest, not establish international institutions for their own sake. Accordingly we are critical of many of the objectives built into the EU treaties, of the EU institutions and how they work, and of many particular EU policies. We believe many things done and decided in Europe might better be done by member states or by regions or localities.

However there are essential matters – safeguarding basic rights, peace and security achieved through mutual understanding, environmental protection, the spread of culture and ideas, regulation of the financial system - where we agree that EU action is appropriate.

While the EU has control over trade, we accept that in practice the way to affect these matters is to call for EU action – so we call, for example, for a EU ban on genetically modified (GM) foods because in current circumstances that is the best way to achieve a ban in the UK. And there are other matters, for example welfare policy, where although member states retain basic control, the Open Method of Co-ordination between member states allows for a useful measure of discussion and co-ordination on matters of mutual interest.

Invest massively in renewable energy

In the UK we must completely renew our energy infrastructure. Many European countries are already doing much better than the UK; Germany generates 14% of its electricity from renewables, while the UK manages only 5%. Now is the time to make a major push to develop renewable energy, both because it is urgently required and because it will create jobs. Most of this will require an effort in the UK if we are to reach the Green Party target of about half our total energy coming from renewables by 2020 (currently only 2% does), but there are some areas where European action is important:

- Most importantly, we oppose any European rules (concerning state aid, for example) that prevent direct government help to renewables;
- We support Europe-wide renewable energy initiatives such as an under-sea grid for offshore wind and marine power, concentrated solar power plants in Southern Europe and the North African deserts and the building of highly efficient long-distance High Voltage DC power lines;
- We would seek agreement in the EU to abolish VAT on energy-efficient improvements to properties;
- We will also support higher energy-efficiency standards for appliances sold in the EU with better energy labelling;
- We would shift EU subsidies and support for research and development from nuclear and fossil fuels to the renewable energy sector.

These and other proposals on energy efficiency will make the Green Party target of 50% renewables by 2020 easier to reach, as the total energy required is less.

And equally importantly, it is vital that European policies discourage the development of damaging non-fossil sources. :

- Most importantly, nuclear power is expensive and dangerous, and an issue for the whole of Europe, not just individual member states. As the explosion at Chernobyl in 1986 showed, nuclear accidents can have far-ranging effects. We are at risk from stations in other European countries, as well as from those in the UK. Green MEPs will campaign for an end to nuclear power throughout Europe, and against any new nuclear plants. The Euratom Treaty should be replaced with new European laws to promote the use of renewable energy sources; and
- We oppose the large-scale use of agro-fuels, especially where they take land from much-needed food crops. In particular our MEPs will argue for the abolition of European targets to encourage the use of agro-fuels and a moratorium on the import and use of agro-fuels from large scale monocultures.

But there are things the UK government should be doing. The Green Party believes that:

- Large-scale power generation and distribution must be brought back into the public sector, current coal station schemes must be cancelled, and that we must move ahead rapidly with large-scale wind and tidal generation, and necessary development of the grid, investing £4 bn in the first year and creating 40,000 jobs;
- Domestic micro-generation must be encouraged by massively increasing the size of existing schemes to £2 bn per year, creating a further 40,000 jobs and by introducing long term feed in tariffs;

- The introduction of smart meters must be accelerated; and
- Planning guidance must be changed to assist renewables.

Green Energy

“Our energy policy is not just the best for climate change; it also produces the most jobs”

Energy Source	Jobs per year per TWh
Wind	918 - 2400
Coal	370
Gas and Oil	250-265
Nuclear	75

But the real winner for creating jobs is energy efficiency, like our proposals for insulation. It has been estimated that an energy efficiency increase of 1% a year, sustained over a 10-year period, would create 200,000 additional jobs in the EU sustained over 10 years.

From Goldemberg, J., 2004, The Case for Renewable Energies, International Conference for Renewable Energies, Bonn, and DG Internal Policies of the Union, Economic and Scientific Policy Dept, Briefing Note on the employment potential of renewable forms of energy and increased efficiency of energy use, p13, referencing European Commission, 2005, Doing More With Less – Green Paper on energy efficiency.

Public transport

Carbon dioxide emissions from transport are still growing. They grew in the EU by 32% between 1990 and 2005, while other sectors declined by 9.5% over the same period. Public transport creates jobs, and takes polluting cars off the roads. If we can get fares down, people will save money. Public transport is particularly important for the elderly and the less well-off. So a major expansion of public transport is an obvious candidate for the Green New Deal.

The first and quickest part of the investment in public transport that the Green Party proposes would effectively double the size of the bus fleet. An investment of £3 bn would buy 30,000 new buses, create 70,000 jobs. A further £2 bn would be used to subsidise fares and get new services running. That would begin to remove a major barrier to bus use: the lack of services for the journeys people want to make, at the time they want to make them.

The plan allows for a further £2 bn to be spent on a railway system brought back into public ownership, on new track and rolling stock, and on urban tram schemes, creating 20,000 jobs. Also vitally important is tackling the fact that on average, rail fares in Britain are 50% higher than elsewhere in Europe. We favour spending £3 bn to bring rail fares in line with the European average.

But there is some spending that we would not accept. We would not allow any more airport runways, including the third runway at Heathrow. The Green MEPs have used the likely breach of air quality standards to call the expansion of Heathrow into question. We would not build any new major roads. These are transport solutions from the past; we must invest for the future.

In the EU, Green MEPs will work for

- An aviation fuel levy on all planes arriving in, or departing from, EU airports, including UK domestic flights, thereby ending the exemption of aviation from the fuel tax that motorists pay;
- The imposition of VAT on aviation, so ending an unfair subsidy to aviation, which when taken with fuel duty, is worth £10 bn per annum in the UK alone;
- Much tougher provisions on the inclusion of air travel in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. This must take into account the fact that emissions have a worse warming effect when they take place high in the atmosphere;

- The promotion of walking and cycling within an EU transport policy;
- The introduction of a core UK rail freight network that includes the Channel Tunnel to connect with European networks;
- Freedom for member states to charge tolls on heavy goods vehicles that reflect their true environmental costs. We would introduce road user charges for lorries in Britain, which some EU countries have already successfully introduced but the UK has abandoned as being ‘too difficult’;
- Opposition to any EU proposals to allow longer or heavier lorries on our roads;
- The adoption of much more rigorous long-term EU targets on the development of more fuel-efficient cars, including targets of an average of 80g CO₂/km by 2020, and 60g by 2025;
- An EU pilot scheme to fund reductions in the carbon used in travel, particularly through behavioural change;
- Stricter EU regulation of vehicle tyres, so that noise levels and contribution to CO₂ emissions for all tyres reach the levels achieved by the best tyres
- The enforcement in the UK of EU rules on air pollution covering particulate emissions, which have significant and serious health effects, particularly London. Jean Lambert MEP has welcomed the recent decision by the Commission to begin proceedings against the UK for breaching the emissions standards; and
- The EU to take the lead in including shipping in greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Right to rent and investment in public rented housing

Housing provision and the construction industry are in crisis. Many households cannot find affordable housing, especially housing for rent. Others, struggling with mortgage arrears, face re-possession and homelessness. And the builders who could be helping to solve these problems have been left struggling with unemployment. It is for governments to solve these

“Here in Yorkshire, Greens have proved that an ambitious free insulation scheme is practical. We worked in partnership with energy companies to provide free insulation for households in Kirklees in a scheme that has created more than 128 jobs and new training facilities. The scheme cost £20m over three years, and aims to insulate 40-60,000 homes in total. It has also saved the average family around £150 annually off their fuel bills.”

Councillor Andy Cooper

problems by employing building workers in a large programme of social housing, and by further expanding the public housing stock through a Right to Rent scheme.

This is largely a matter for UK government and UK local authorities and across Europe circumstances vary in different member states. Green MEPS will seek to ensure that expertise can be shared where this can usefully be done.

In the UK we support a £6 bn fund being made available to local authorities to buy

up and convert, or in some cases build, new housing, for rent. This would pay for 60,000 new homes to be built to low carbon standards, as far as possible on brownfield sites, providing experience and training to those who take the 140,000 jobs created by the scheme. Detailed planning decisions on such homes would be taken locally.

A further £3 bn would be provided for a Right to Rent scheme. This would fund the purchase by local authorities of homes threatened by re-possession, which would then be rented back to the occupiers. We expect about 20,000 of the 40,000 likely to be threatened by re-possession might use this scheme. Together, these two measures would ensure that 80,000 families who would have been homeless would avoid that fate.

Free insulation for homes, schools and hospitals

About a third of greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings. These can be reduced substantially by improving insulation. Not only are emissions reduced, but jobs are created and homeowners, businesses and institutions save money on heating bills.

We believe we should insulate all 20 million uninsulated homes in the UK through a simple, free government-funded scheme run by local authorities. We could aim to insulate four million homes a year, covering everyone in five years. This would include, where it is possible and appropriate, measures for the more difficult cases of houses with solid walls. Adding schools and hospitals, would cost about £4 bn a year and create around 80,000 jobs. Homeowners would save substantially on their energy bills; older people in particular would benefit from warmer homes.

Green MEPs would argue for EU funds to assist such an insulation scheme. In addition, the Green Party supports the strengthening of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive in order to help reduce emission and as part of the move to a zero-carbon building stock. All EU countries should be brought up to the same minimum level for incentives and rules on renewable heating and cooling on new buildings (at present, Britain lags far behind).

Green workforce training

We need a revolution in skills to build the new green economy: new skills need to be developed in green building techniques, renewables engineering, organic agriculture and horticulture, and existing traditional skills, from driving buses to gardening organically, need to be more widely disseminated. The EU's Sustainable Development Strategy now recognises the importance of education and training in such skills, thanks to the Greens. We can use the time when people can't get jobs to train them to do the work that will need to be done in the future. We also need to factor in the environmental dimension for all jobs. This is why the Greens are supporting the introduction of statutory environmental representatives in the workplace, to ensure that the workforce is fully involved in the necessary changes.

We recognise that there will be considerable changes in the workplace, as certain sectors adapt to a climate change world; some may disappear and new sectors arise. This requires careful management and support. This is why Greens support the concept of "Just Transition" as developed by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), with the International Labour Organisation (ILO.) We could transform

the EU Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF, a fund designed to help workers find new employment) to support industries in transition.

At a local level we should assist local authorities to bring the jobless and the opportunities for employment together, and involve communities in small projects, which are usually job-rich, and which make simple and practical improvements, provide training and often have positive outcomes for social cohesion and mental well-being.

“Getting a Green New Deal right in Europe will depend on addressing the green skills gap. An ambitious European-level green skills and jobs programme has never been more urgent and will only be achieved with public investment and planning.

We will not be able to deliver on climate change targets unless we have an appropriately skilled workforce. The greenest job of all will be making it happen, and that's what Green MEPs are pledging they will do today.”

Jean Lambert MEP

In the UK we would propose as part of the Green New Deal a £7 bn training programme involving up to 470,000 unemployed people at any one time. And in Europe we would argue for European funds, in particular the Globalisation Adjustment Fund but also the European Social Fund, to be used partially to fund such schemes.

Introduce citizens' pensions and free social care for older people

In hard times it is more than ever important that we look out for vulnerable members of the community. In particular this includes older people, who have worked hard in their lives to produce so much of what we enjoy now. Older people should be able to live in dignity and with security, not face poverty and financial worries, cold homes and loneliness. The Green New Deal can help move state pension policy in a different direction.

The UK now pays an inadequate state pension (only £95.25 for a full state pension for a single person). The level of the pension is still not linked to average earnings (and which is frozen at wholly inadequate levels for UK pensioners living abroad in certain countries). It depends on an individual's contribution record, discriminating in particular against women, but also others with poor contribution records such as those with poor health or who have been carers.

The UK pension is in theory topped up by means-tested pension credits, but these discriminate against anyone with very modest savings, creating a disincentive to save.

As a result of the existing system, as many as one in four UK pensioners live in poverty. Some European countries have state systems that are more generous for some, but these systems face substantial funding problems in the future and do not provide a clear way forward.

The Green Party proposes instead a new system of Citizens' Pensions for the UK. This would reflect the lives people actually

lead, rather than being tied to the assumed male pattern of 40 years of full-time work. The Citizens' Pension would be paid unconditionally to all older people in the UK (independent of contribution record) at the rate of the official poverty line (currently £165.00 per week for someone living alone), and would be linked to average earnings. Housing Benefit and disability benefits would continue to be paid. The demeaning means-tested Pension Credits would be abolished.

We would also put an end to the way in which the principle of free NHS care has been withdrawn from those who need it most. We would provide free of charge to any elderly person who needs it, either residential care or support for living in sheltered housing or at home. If it can be done in Scotland it can be done in England and Wales. This will cost about £3 bn per annum and create in the region of 60,000 jobs. Green MEPs have argued for raising the pay and training of professional carers, and for the valuable role of all carers to be better recognised and supported.

Paying for the Green New Deal

The investment described above (apart from the welfare changes, which would be funded from a fundamental reform of income taxes) totals £44 bn and could directly create one million new jobs within a full year, with other jobs created by the Citizens' Income system. This cost must be paid for.

Part of the cost would come from improved tax collection and the abolition of tax havens described above. A total of £10 bn a year – less than half the total potential from these sources – could be found this way.

Savings would come from the cancellation of wasteful government programmes. For example, cancelling all major new roads would save £3bn per year. Not going ahead with the renewal of Trident defence contracts would save a further £3 bn (the total cost of the replacement is around £25 bn, with another £1-2 bn spent on running either the old or the new system each year). Preparations for ID cards are wasting £1 bn a year. A windfall tax on the energy companies would add another £2 bn. That leaves £25 bn needed to fund this package. In part that would be reduced because the yield from taxation would rise and government costs fall as employment rises as the programme takes effect.

In the longer term, the package would begin to pay for itself. Increasing energy efficiency means that energy does not have to be generated, saving money. As oil prices rise, renewables will be cheaper than the fossil fuel alternatives. Improved public transport will mean people will not have to pay for private cars. None of this is true for responses, like Labour's, that simply encourage consumption.

Like the Government, we would be prepared to add such financing needs as remains to Government borrowing. This could, however, be done much more imaginatively than is currently the practice, and with less reliance on international money markets. Citizens and institutional investors can provide funding for the Green New Deal by investment in 'Green gilts' (government bonds), guaranteed not just in terms of an interest rate, but also in terms of their use to reduce carbon. New green products could be introduced and revitalise National Savings. Local authority bonds could also be the major vehicle for the funds raised for this programme. Green MEPs will press for some of this expenditure, such as that on training, to come from European funds, for example the European Social Fund.

Greens support the right of older people to go on working as long as they want to, not to be forced by their employer to retire at 65. Moreover they should be able to work for reduced hours if they wish. Green MEPs have been pressing for better provisions for transferring occupational pensions when workers change jobs, especially if the move is between member states.

End poverty with the citizens' income

The UK government, with a sense of timing that is insensitive and cruel, is now seeking to lead Europe in creating an ever more harsh welfare system. Pressure is being put on single parents and the long-term sick to go back to work at a time when job opportunities barely exist. Moreover, the system is riddled with benefit traps, so that many of those who do go back to work find that they are left in an even worse financial position as benefits are withdrawn.

We think the UK should be leading Europe in exactly the opposite direction. Everyone should receive as a matter of right a basic Citizen's Income, paid without any eligibility conditions or means testing. This would be paid at the basic Jobseekers allowance rate, currently £64.30 pw. This (and Citizens' Pension) would be paid for by abolishing income tax personal allowances and then introducing a series of graded income tax bands, starting at a low level and taxing the highest incomes more than at present. For most people in work with ordinary incomes the overall effect would be approximately neutral – the extra Citizens' Income would be balanced by increased tax. But people on the lowest incomes would benefit considerably.

The benefits trap would be abolished, and it would be financially worthwhile to take those small, part-time or informal jobs that

the present system penalises, with the added social benefits that involvement in the workplace can bring. And there would be no intrusion by the state into people's personal circumstances to assess their eligibility. Most benefit frauds would no longer be possible, and many individuals currently forced into the black economy would find themselves on the right side of the law.

Invest in waste management

Europe's landfill directives have forced a reluctant revolution upon our out-dated waste management system. Re-use and recycling have slowly improved, and the use of landfill has declined. But the UK still lags behind leading European countries, not least because our local authorities are forced by government to deal with waste on the cheap. We would double expenditure on municipal waste management, spending an extra £4 bn to encourage re-use and repair, increase recycling and digestion and reduce landfill and incineration, thus cutting greenhouse gas emissions. This could create 80,000 new jobs.

Our goal is the elimination of incineration altogether – there are better ways to use valuable resources such as paper than burning it – and moving towards a zero waste society. During the negotiations on the Waste Framework Directive, Green MEPs consistently promoted an ambitious re-use/recycling agenda, and challenged the "reclassification" of incineration as a form of "energy recovery", as supported by other political groups.

Fair trade not free trade

At the heart of the European project is a commitment to free trade, both within Europe and worldwide. And worldwide the

EU has been a cheerleader for the multinationals in the dogmatically free trade World Trade Organisation (WTO). The Green Party rejects the widespread view that free trade is automatically a good thing. Free trade comes at a cost because:

- It encourages a “race to the bottom”, in which countries are forced to compete with one another to offer the lowest costs, leading to downward pressure on wages and environmental protection, as well as lowering of corporate taxation;
- The liberalisation of trade in goods and services has rendered the world economy increasingly unstable because economic contagion spreads more quickly;
- It destroys infant industries in poorer countries, which are forced to open their markets to imports from more developed countries, and undermines efforts to become more self-reliant in both North and South; and
- It produces increased international trade, which makes a significant contribution to the rise in transport-related carbon emissions.

The EU's international trade policy (now marketed under the title Global Europe) is becoming increasingly aggressive, forcing markets open in some of the world's poorest countries, and exacerbating poverty and inequality. Green MEPs have exposed these practices and helped to build momentum for genuine fair trade, putting the interests of the poorest first.

We must allow all countries, especially the least well-off, to protect their own economies, workers, and environments. Our MEPs will work to:

- Promote fair trade, so that trade with developing countries is based on decent pay and conditions, with a fair price paid to producers. Building on the tripling of fair trade sales in Europe from

2004-2007, we would give such goods preferential access to EU markets;

- End the current practice of imposing unfair “economic partnership agreements” (EPAs) on developing countries, and replace them with genuine partnership deals that allow countries to decide whether services and investment are covered, and which do not automatically impose liberalisation;
- End EU export subsidies of exports to poorer countries;
- Ensure that illegally logged timber cannot be imported into the EU;
- Demand that the Commission instigates a review of the EU's Global Europe Strategy at the earliest opportunity. Far from delivering on its promise of creating “sustainable growth” and more jobs both inside Europe and in developing countries, it will be severely detrimental to both;
- Ensure that a conclusion to the Doha Round of world trade talks is not rushed through, on the basis of the current unacceptable proposals – no deal is better than a bad deal;
- Halt EU demands that developing countries agree to more financial deregulation – the current financial crisis shows just how wrong-headed such moves are; and
- Open up bilateral and multilateral trade policy processes and proceedings to enable greater democratic accountability and scrutiny by parliamentarians and civil society. The EU Parliament should be given co-decision powers on such matters.

Finally and crucially, a major economic effect of the EU on developing countries is through the activities of EU-based multinational companies. Many of them pay scant regard to minimum labour, human rights and environmental standards

in the developing countries in which they operate. Triple line reporting (financial, social and environmental) will help, but more direct legal responsibility in the EU for their activities in the developing world is required. Green MEPs will press for:

- EU parent companies to have direct liability in Europe for the activities of their subsidiaries outside the EU;
- EU parent companies to have a duty of care to prevent human rights abuses by those under their control; and
- Mandatory reporting by large companies of their worldwide social and environmental impacts.

Rights for working people

An economic downturn is always bad for working people, not just those who are left unemployed. Their conditions of work come under attack as many employers seek to pay lower wages, employ more casuals and otherwise shift the burden onto their employees. Green MEPs will continue to work to defend workers' rights, and to defend the right to a real minimum wage, that is a living wage. We consider that essentially these are matters for member states, but recognise that, in practice, action in Europe has an important impact on the UK.

Green MEPs have a proud record fighting against the UK opt-out from the Working Time Directive, and for on-call time at the workplace to be classed as working time. But UK employees still work some of the longest hours in Europe – an average of 44 hours per week compared to 38 in France and 40 in Germany. Four million workers in the UK regularly work more than 48 hours; many are not paid for those extra hours and would prefer not to work them. It is time to end the UK long hours culture, with its damaging effects on our families, our health and our personal lives.

Green MEPs will support a basic 35-hour week, and no weakening of the Working Time Directive. Shorter hours create jobs; it is estimated that the 35-hour week in France created half a million jobs.

Our MEPs will support moves to extend European works councils. We also support the revision of Posted Workers Directive as it is poorly applied in many cases and should not be used to undermine national pay and conditions. The UK Government should also give social partner agreements legal force as a step towards preventing abuse and remove the measure which make it difficult for Trades Unions to organise on site.

Green MEPs will support EU health and safety legislation on Muscular-Skeletal Protection; such problems in the workplace remain the major cause of missed days of work.

Women in the EU still face discrimination at work. In particular they earn 16% less than men. Green MEPs will continue to press for the effective implementation of legislation on equal pay. In the UK we favour equal pay audits for larger employers; legal changes to make it much easier for women to take equal pay cases to court, and to allow women to take such cases as a group, with the support of the unions; and would require 40% of board members of larger companies to be female within five years.

Taxation

Taxation is mainly a matter for Member States, not the European Union, but the EU does largely control Value Added Tax (VAT). The Green Party favours the introduction of eco-taxes: taxes to discourage activities that create pollution or use finite resources. Any increase in eco-taxes will be balanced by a reduction in other taxes: they are designed to

disincentivise harmful activities, not act as a cash-cow for the government.

Because eco-taxes are indirect taxes, we recognise that they are generally regressive, which means they bear more heavily on the poor than the rich. So we believe that increases in eco-taxes should be balanced by reductions in other regressive indirect taxes. VAT is the obvious candidate, and in the long run we

would replace VAT by eco-taxes. We would press in Europe for existing taxation rules to be changed to make this possible.

Increasing eco-taxes will increase the cost of resources relative to the cost of employing workers. As a result businesses will want to cut resource use, and increase that of labour, thus creating more jobs.

“At the heart of our Public Service Pledge is a commitment to high quality public services, social dialogue and collective bargaining as a human right.”

Jean Lambert MEP, launching the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) “Public Service Pledge”

local communities – the greening of everyday life

The places we live are very important to all of us. We all want to live in safe, healthy, thriving communities. These are where we take action when we want to do things, when we want to change things, when we want to make a difference. This is why the Green Party believes that decisions should be at a local appropriate level. Government should wherever possible decentralise and localise.

The quality of our local services has a lot to do with the quality of our lives. None of us wants to travel miles to go to school or to the doctor. Services must be accessible, except in certain very rural areas where that is simply not possible. This means they must be easy and affordable to reach by public transport. It also makes environmental sense to have good, local services. Less travel means less emission of greenhouse gases. We will spearhead a revival in public spaces – libraries, parks, playgrounds – as places every community member can utilise and enjoy, and where they can interact and cooperate with others.

In the EU, Green MEPs will argue for universal access to key services. In the UK these services must also be free at the point of delivery. The Green Party believes that we should pay for these services with a taxation system that promotes fairness and rewards behaviour that's good for society and good for the environment.

Green MEPs will work to reverse the trend towards the liberalisation, privatisation and de-regulation of public services and utilities. An important part of this trend is driven by decisions in Europe, such as through EU influence on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Electing Green MEPs is one crucial step in the fight against privatisation and deregulation of public services.

Restorative Justice works

International experts agree conclusively that Restorative Justice has:

- substantially reduced repeat offending for some offenders;
- reduced crime-victims' post-traumatic stress symptoms and related costs;
- provided victims with more satisfaction with justice;
- reduced the costs of criminal justice,
- reduced recidivism more than prison (adults) or as well as prison (youths).

The Smith Institute/ Esmee Fairbairn Trust - "Restorative Justice – The Evidence" (2007)

Our Green New Deal would do much to improve local communities. Many more buses would make services more accessible. The job training programme offers many opportunities to make local communities more attractive. More local affordable housing will keep families and communities together.

Crime, Policing, and Law and Order

The Green party takes the issue of crime very seriously. We feel that being a victim of crime or the fear of crime is something that citizens have a right to feel protected from and believe that more needs to be done to protect them. We need crime policies that actually work in preventing generation upon generation of new criminals being created. Jean Lambert has pressed for parliamentary support for a

“A key protective factor in preventing youth crime is engaging in positive socialising activities and having lots to do locally”

IPPR (2008) “Make me a criminal”

“Lack of public employees such as railway guards, bus conductors and park keepers has weakened informal control mechanisms”

David Faulkner (2003) “Crime, Citizenship, and Community”

number of initiatives on the rights of the child, including a child's right to play, right to a clean and protected environment, and a call for the EU to look at best practice in dealing with young offenders. We need

justice policies that actually work in stopping offenders re-offending. And we need the police and government to make sure they have the trust of citizens to help them effectively fight crime.

We believe that this trust, so vital for the collection of intelligence in order to act against criminal behaviour, is under threat because of the Labour governments approach to civil liberties, and as demonstrated in the death of Ian Tomlinson and Stephen Lawrence, the policing of public order and communities. As a result we believe that the UK government should abide by the Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and recognise the rights of terrorism suspects.

We also want to establish a full investigation into policing methods of protest, with future policing of such events to be in line with the findings of such an investigation.

Beyond civil liberties concerns we also believe that citizens of the UK are entitled to more effective protection from becoming victims of crime and the fear of crime. To do this we would:

- Look to establish restorative justice as a key feature of the UK criminal justice system. The primary aim will be to restore and, if necessary, improve the position of the victim and the community; the offender will be required to make amends.

- Invest the £5.3 bn saved by not having ID cards in crime prevention measures, including more community policing, more local police stations and the return of park keepers, bus conductors and others who have an important effect on social order.

- Improve the design of our cities to provide safer streets and public spaces
- Ensure universal access to high quality youth centres to provide an outlet for young people outside of school hours
- Bring in a Civil Law Injunction Programme (CLIP) to more effectively deal with anti-social behaviour
- Oppose any further privatisation of the prison system, as it is vital that where custody is used it is effective in preventing offenders from re-offending once they are released. To put the safety of the potential victims in the hands of companies whose primary duty is to enhance profits is a dereliction of duty that the government has to protect the public.

Health

The Green Party believes in a much stronger emphasis on the prevention of ill health, with lifestyles and healthier environments, than is currently the case. A long-term preventive approach to health requires healthier eating, more walking and cycling, shorter working hours, less stress and a reduction in environmental pollutants. The benefits of each of these individually are multiplied when brought together in a healthy overall lifestyle.

Most health policy is made in the UK. But there are EU policies that affect our ability to prevent ill health. Green MEPs have been instrumental in demanding much higher levels of protection from causes of

ill-health in our environment, including chemicals and pesticides. Since there is increasing evidence of the links between our exposure to an ever-growing cocktail of chemicals, and diseases such as cancer, we will continue to press for greater regulation.

Another cause of ill-health is poor food. Food in hospitals and schools would be healthier and would better support the local economy if the institutions were able to buy more fresh and local ingredients. But the EU Directive on Procurement currently prevents public sector institutions, such as schools, hospitals and other public services, from specifying local sources as part of their tendering process for large contracts. Our MEPs will fight these restrictions.

In addition:

- Within the EU there are pressures for privatisation and competition within the health service and elsewhere in the public sector. Green MEPs will support moves for a framework directive limiting market penetration into public services. We will support moves for an EU action programme on quality public services;
- Green MEPs have fully supported moves to end discrimination on grounds of age in the delivery of healthcare;
- Green MEPs will support health and safety legislation of importance to health care workers, for example to prevent needle-stick injuries or exposure to violence at work;
- While Green MEPs have opposed moves to have cash follow patients under the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive, we

Reducing the risk of cancer

Caroline Lucas and other Green MEPs have successfully persuaded the Parliament to back the establishment of an EU Cancer task force that will focus on exploring the environmental factors behind the increase in cases of cancer. They have forced the toy industry to stop using toxic substances in toys and secured Parliamentary support for a ban on some of the most hazardous pesticides and chemicals.

have always supported the right to be reimbursed when required for urgent, medically necessary treatment.

- Greens have supported medical co-operation, for example in improving the quality of research through the sharing of research results, in the establishment of centres of excellence, in developing best practice for preventing infections such as MRSA or for the treatment of conditions such as Alzheimer's, or on the need to reduce the stigma associated with mental ill-health.

And in the UK Greens will work to maintain the basic principles of the NHS:

- Keeping the health service universal and free at the point of delivery, and in particular restoring a free and universal NHS dental service;
- Ending phoney patient choice when what matters is the availability of quality care close to where you live; and
- Treating patients with dignity.

Food

Food, fisheries and agricultural policy is made in Brussels, through the wasteful and inequitable £42 bn Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

While we recognise the need for a framework of European legislation on environmental issues such as the

protection of the shared seas around Europe, we believe that most decisions on agriculture and fishing should be made at national and regional levels. However, while the EU continues to be the place where these decisions are made, our MEPs will press for:

- The Common Agricultural Policy to cease to subsidise industrial agriculture and to encourage food production to go organic, promote local consumption, encourage bio-diversity and do more to enhance both landscape and wildlife. In particular pesticide, antibiotic and other drug residues in food must be progressively eliminated;
- Removal of EU barriers to local food production and consumption within the EU and respect for the principle of food sovereignty elsewhere in the world, especially in developing countries;
- A permanent European Union ban on genetically modified plants and animals, and on genetically modified ingredients in food and animal feed. We need to use the weight of the EU to negotiate for this to be permissible under WTO rules;
- Individual EU regions within member states to have the power to impose their own GM bans while no EU ban on genetically modified imports is in place;
- Ending live animal exports and limiting journey times for all animal transport;
- Phasing out all forms of factory farming of livestock and enforcement of strict animal welfare standards generally, including in organic agriculture;

Farm subsidies – where the money goes

Almost half the €4.3 bn received in the UK from CAP is paid to just 10% of the biggest recipients, with the top recipient, Tate & Lyle Europe, receiving over €500m alone. In the EU as a whole 85% of payments go to the largest 18% of farms. While the CAP is often represented as helping smaller farms, in practice it is a massive subsidy to agribusiness.

Figures for 2006 (UK) and 2005 (EU) from farmsubsidy.org

- An end to ill thought-out schemes for EU regulation such as the plans to electronically tag every sheep in the EU;
 - Promoting dietary changes in order to reduce consumption of animal products, including fish, to sustainable levels;
 - The regulation of the food industry to ensure that processed food products do not contain excessive amounts of harmful ingredients such as fat, sugars and salt;
 - The release of Britain from the Common Fisheries Policy and its replacement by EU legislation to protect marine ecosystems; and
 - An end to one-sided EU fisheries agreements with developing countries which provide cheap fish in Europe at the expense of local needs.
-

Nature reserves and other protected areas are invaluable and we want to see the protection offered by the Habitats Directive and other EU laws strengthened and enforced more firmly. But we will go further in promoting landscape-scale conservation, for example using reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to encourage restoration of heath-lands, woods, marshland and other important habitats. We also need to encourage tranquillity in our urban environments, with less litter, less noise, reduced light pollution and more green spaces. We have a historic opportunity not only to halt the degradation of our natural environment, but also begin to reverse two centuries of exploitation.

Wildlife and Landscape

Our natural environment continues to be under threat from over-development, pollution and exploitation. As well as the loss of biodiversity, the very quality of our landscape, from uplands to estuaries, is being harmed. That is why we must:

- Reduce dramatically the use of pesticides and introduce measures such as 'buffer zones' around sprayed fields to protect humans as well as wildlife;
- Ensure that protection for the countryside provided under EU law is not eroded by Labour's introduction of a non-elected Planning Commission, particularly on new roads, runways, incinerators and inappropriate housing developments; and
- Further raise standards and tackle pollution through strengthening and rigorously enforcing Air and Water Quality framework directives.

citizens, government and the world - our place in wider communities

We have learnt only too painfully in the last year that an economy that depends on consumption built on debt is a vulnerable and unsustainable economy. First, the credit crunch has caused a rapid economic slowdown. Second, an economy that depends only on stimulating consumption cannot be sustained within the resources of a single planet.

The Green Party believes that there has been too much emphasis in recent years on individuals as consumers, rather than as people who are part of wider communities and society. Creating a fair and sustainable society is a job for government – but it is also a job for every member of the community. The Green Party will work towards sustainable consumption through the creation of a culture that recognises the importance of community as well as the more efficient use of resources.

Human rights

The foundations of citizenship are human rights and social responsibilities. Rights must be seen within the context of our wider environment, and our responsibilities to each other. We all have rights, and respect for them is a foundation for a good society, but equally we must respect that wider society and environment.

A particular concern for the Green Party is to respect the right of future generations not to be disadvantaged by damage that this generation does to the environment. We must also support solidarity between existing generations, between young and old.

We regard support for basic human rights as part of the purpose of the EU, and support incorporating the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights within any EU constitution. An important part of human rights is to prevent discrimination based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion. We must also take action to ensure that people do not suffer unfair discrimination on grounds of social origin.

Green MEPs would pursue (among others) the following human rights issues in Europe:

- With an ageing population much more needs to be done to counter age discrimination, not just in employment, but also to enable older people to enjoy equal rights in all areas of life, in social inclusion and in enjoying the same freedom of movement and full citizenship

as any other EU citizens. We support moves towards establishing an International Convention on the Rights of Older People;

- Real respect for the rights of children: the EU should sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and making changes in many areas that make the lives of some children, including in the UK, are less subject to poverty, whether financial or of opportunity;
- Genuine respect for religious diversity and belief within the whole EU area;
- Violence against women, including rape and sexual assault, is still treated far less seriously than it should be in many parts of the EU, and Green MEPs would support increased funding through Daphne, the EU's programme to prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women;
- Discrimination based on sexual orientation persists in Europe. Mutual recognition by European countries of same sex partnerships (and indeed of marriages and parental rights) would be a step forward;
- An end to the practice of sending Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gender (LGBT) asylum-seekers back to countries where they will be persecuted because of their sexuality;
- For Member states to fully uphold LGBT rights, particularly in Eastern Europe, where attacks on PRIDE marches and on LGBT nightclubs are evidence that government and police attitudes remain tolerant, and even encouraging of, homophobic violence and repression;
- For the EU to use its position to place pressure on other countries where

members of the LGBT community are criminalised because of their sexuality;

- Continuing support in the wider international context for EU support for the UN resolution on banning on the death penalty;
- While we welcome US proposals to shut Guantanamo Bay, there should be no toleration anywhere within the EU of torture, or the deportation of suspects to states where they face a risk of torture,

“The precautionary principle is supposed to be at the heart of EU policy making, yet all too often the interests of corporate profits are put ahead of the environment and human health. I want to continue my work to promote organic agriculture, a reduction in pesticide use, and stronger regulation of chemicals in our environment. I can only do that with hope of full success if the corporate lobbyists can be controlled and regulated.”

Caroline Lucas MEP

or the practice of extraordinary rendition. We accept that EU states have to play their part in re-settling ex-Guantanamo detainees who do not face trial and will press for an independent inquiry in the EU into the roles of EU states into the whole episode;

- Press for the EU to use trade measures to defend human rights when appropriate, such as in relation to the EU/Israel Trade Agreement (see below) or in the current campaign to deny certain trade preferences (GSP+) to Sri

Lanka because of human rights violations;

- Complete opposition to racism within the EU, and in particular proper respect for Roma and traveller communities and the implementation of the existing EU legislation against discrimination on grounds of race or ethnicity;
- Giving priority to EU actions in support of the Millennium Development Goals, especially gender equality and the right to health and education for the most vulnerable in developing countries;
- Opposition to unnecessary surveillance and to state-run DNA databases and in general to limit data sharing to cases where there is a clear need and to decentralise government data systems;
- Freeing up of patent restrictions on software, downloads and life-saving drugs;
- Ratification by all member states of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Use the European Parliament to seek a global ban on depleted uranium weapons, and other weapons such as landmines which are persistent and inevitably cause long-term damage to civilian populations; and
- Making a reality of freedom of movement within the EU by improving co-ordination of the social security systems between member states and seeking an end to transition periods for those coming from new Member States.

Animal Protection

Unlike Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, taking animal protection seriously comes naturally to Greens. Improving welfare standards in

farming is covered above, and we will also work in the EU for:

- An immediate halt to xenotransplantation, genetic manipulation and cloning of animals;
- An immediate ban on the harmful use of animals (including but not only primates) in research, testing and education;
- Greater investment in the development of alternatives to animal experiments;
- The abolition of zoos (except for the benefit of the animals concerned) and the use of animals in circuses;
- Maintaining the ban on hunting with hounds and extending the ban to other bloodsports;
- Strict regulation of the companion animal trade including a ban on the import of so-called 'exotic pets'; and
- A ban on the import of seal products, the trapping of wild animals for fur, and fur farming.

EU government

The EU institutions are remote, untransparent, and undemocratic. The appointed Commission is too strong and it alone should not have the power of legislative initiative. The directly and democratically elected European Parliament by contrast is too weak. In particular it needs greater powers of co-decision with the Council. Strong action is also needed to clean up Brussels bureaucracy, and enforce a transparent and fair system for MEP expenses.

The enlarged EU also needs a proper constitution, but the Lisbon Treaty is not up to the job. A European Constitution should define the values, objectives, powers, decision-making procedures and institutions of the EU. The Constitution should also set out the basic rights and

Migration

Green MEP Jean Lambert secured parliamentary support for stating that future Commission proposals on legal migration should include proposals to enable migrants to change their status or their job whilst remaining within the EU. The Parliament also backed Jean's call that a legal status should be defined for people who are not refugees but cannot be returned to their country of origin.

freedoms of citizens. But it should not enshrine particular policies.

In every action of the EU, social justice and environmental factors must be regarded as central to our economic objectives. Whatever constitution is put forward, it should be subject to a referendum in every member state where that is legally possible, including the UK.

There are also a range of particular issues concerning the operation of the European Parliament that will be pursued by Green MEPs.

- All lobbying, and in particular corporate lobbying should be registered and fully disclosed. Green MEPs disclose any lobbying that they are subject to, and will fight to secure the same rules for the entire Parliament;
- There should be a legal basis for the relationship between civil society organisations and the EU institutions to provide for transparent dialogue in participatory decision making;
- Green MEPs will seek to persuade the Council that the hugely costly and environmentally irresponsible travelling-circus of the parliament's monthly move to Strasbourg should be ended; and
- Green MEPs support the 50/50 campaign for gender equality in the Parliament and the other institutions.

The EU in the world

Under the Maastricht Treaty the EU adopted a Common Foreign and Security Policy. Our Green MEPs have opposed

these arrangements; we do not think the EU is the most appropriate body to discuss security issues in Europe. We favour the more inclusive Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. We do not want the EU to become a super-state, still less do we want it to develop into a military power. We are concerned in particular that the EU should not become simply the European pillar of NATO, a military alliance that we believe should be dissolved.

But we recognise that we have common interests with other EU members, and that the EU members acting together can have greater influence than when acting as individual states. Moreover, we recognise that in recent times, such as over the invasion of Iraq, it has been our European neighbours that have been more responsible than our own government, with its slavish subservience to US policy.

So we welcome European co-operation over matters of foreign policy, and seek to influence it in the directions of peace and sustainability. The EU role will be crucial in particular for the forthcoming climate change negotiations in Copenhagen. There are many other areas where the EU can play a useful role, such as the Middle East, in Kashmir and Sri Lanka; aid, development support, and debt relief for poorer countries; and immigration and asylum.

Our MEPs have spoken against Israel's recent violent and disproportionate military campaign in Gaza. They will continue to press the EU to do all it can to bring about a lasting settlement in the Middle East. The EU has the power to put serious pressure on Israel to lift the siege on Gaza and end the occupation by making the EU-Israel Association Agreement conditional

on it. The EU should suspend the Agreement, and rule out any upgrading of relations, until this is achieved. The EU must also end its refusal to co-operate with the democratically elected Hamas government in Gaza.

We have set out above our proposals for replacing free trade with developing countries by fair trade. Rich countries such as most of those in the EU can do more. We should seek to exceed the UN's 0.7% target for development aid and allocate at

“The EU's Association Agreement with Israel is expressly dependent on both sides respecting basic human rights, yet despite persistent breaches, these clauses have never been invoked. Under these circumstances, it must be immediately suspended. Doing so, as well as attaching the necessary conditions to any future trade policy with Israel, would allow the EU an opportunity to play a significant role in bringing peace and stability to the Middle East.”

Caroline Lucas MEP

least 1% of Gross National Product for aid by 2010. After 2010 this would be increased from the revenues of a Tobin Tax.

EU countries should write off the debts of the least developed countries and of all countries that will not otherwise achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They should also make sufficient funding available to help poor countries with the expansion of renewable energy sources and adapting to climate change, as well as help with reproductive rights and clean water.

Finally, on migration we do not support creating a “Fortress Europe.” Measures to secure the EU's borders by toughening

border controls in neighbouring countries have put the right to seek asylum at risk. We want a humane and just asylum system in which minors should never be detained.

We in the UK are part of the pattern of global migration; more than one in ten people from the UK currently lives or works abroad. We move for the same reasons as others – to earn more, to study, to improve our career prospects or because we want something different in our way of living.

Greens believe that migration should be an active choice, freely made and not the result of poverty or lack of opportunity to earn a living. For many who work away from their own country, the main motivation is to send money home. Such remittances are a vital part of development providing more money than international aid.

Greens believe strongly in anti-discrimination measures and lifelong learning, which will help maximise the potential skills and talents of all within the UK and EU. However, we still face shortages in certain areas of work and at all skill levels, where the UK and other parts of Europe need migrant workers. For example, the UK cannot encourage British farmers to increase their levels of production if the government then denies sufficient entry visas to people to pick and process those crops.

Migrant workers should be entitled to equal treatment with national workers in order to avoid the exploitation of migrant workers and their being used to undercut national terms and conditions. The Government needs to give social partner

agreements the force of law and provide sufficient inspection to enforce them.

Greens have welcomed EU proposals to open up more possibilities for legal migration, but have been disappointed by the eventual begrudging and half-hearted outcomes. We believe we need a more flexible approach to migration, recognising both economic and human needs. We recognise the sensitivities of recruiting some professionals from poorer countries and support an EU code of conduct, which should cover private recruitment agencies, as well as partnership measures to ensure that vulnerable services are supported. We also acknowledge that more needs to be done to retain our own medical professionals.

We reject the use of immigration as a political issue to mask problems such as a lack of high-quality social housing or poor government planning and response to changing needs at the local level.

We also believe that it should be possible for non-EU nationals to change their migration status so as to keep them within the law and prevent the splitting of families because one partner has an irregular status. We support regularisation measures, such as those proposed by London Citizens. We have won a majority

view from the European Parliament that a legal status must be provided for people who have not succeeded in their claim for humanitarian protection but who cannot be returned to their country of origin due to the political situation there. It is not right to use destitution as a measure to force return.

Greens are at the forefront of discussions as to how we should respond to the impact of climate change on population displacement and migration. We believe that the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen must start to actively address these questions. A change in climate is already affecting the ability of some places to produce food as shifting weather patterns mean that rains become less predictable. The rapid melting of glaciers is also reducing supplies of fresh water in some countries. There is an urgent need to ensure the EU provides more in the way of additional assistance for adaptation measures to help keep international promises to small island states at particular risk and ensures that technology transfers take place under affordable conditions. This can help people in developing countries maintain their own livelihoods, so reducing pressures for emigration.

conclusion

At this election Europe faces urgent and difficult problems. These represent interlinked economic and social issues - rising unemployment, poverty and inequality - and interrelated environmental issues.

We have argued that the Green New Deal package of policies, applied in the UK and across Europe, provides the best approach to dealing with this interlinked economic, environmental and social crisis. Unlike the Conservatives, we will not ignore the cost and misery of unemployment and believe that governments must create jobs. Unlike Labour, we would stimulate the economy through green investment, not through increasing consumption. Unlike the other major parties, we believe that this is just the time to address the rising inequality which has so disfigured our society in

recent years. We want to address the triple crisis and give every member of our society the opportunity to have a better life.

The European elections use a fairer voting system based on proportional representation which means that every vote counts. We already have two Green MEPs - and this is your opportunity to elect more, to join the sizeable group of Green MEPs from other countries in the European Parliament. They can make a real difference. And so can you - by voting Green on 4 June.

formalities

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