

EU100-111 Interim amendments to the Vision for Europe

Background paper

Much of the existing Europe Chapter in PSS dates from the early days of the EEC/European Union, before it expanded to include a wide swathe of European countries, before there was proportional representation for elections to the European Parliament, and before we had any Green Party representation in it. They date from a time when Green representation and a green agenda seemed far from the priorities of a bloc focused on neoliberal economic policies, and when few countries in Europe had strong Green parties engaged in politics at the European level. The opening statements of our GPEW policy chapter express what doubtless seemed at the time legitimate concerns about the incompatibility of our goals and visions with the agenda of the European institutions. By contrast, the position is now very much reversed: we have become one of the key pro-European parties in the UK, and we have seen the EU transform itself into an institution that has led the way on workers rights, international human rights, environmental policies and the use of soft power such as conditions on trade deals that can effect positive change in other parts of the world too. The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament was at its strongest when we sent 11 representatives from the UK, and it lost some of its power when we left. While there are still aspects of the EU that all European Green Parties find problematic, it is part of being a Green Party that we favour international collaboration to deliver rights and protections across borders and not just in our own local patch.

In this small motion to replace EU100 to 113 we propose new wording to capture what we understand to be the current vision for Europe of GPEW, in the light of Brexit and the importance of Europe as a force for good in a world where the UK's national government can be the greater risk.

EU 100-101 summarise our attitude to collaborative European institutions and programmes, including, but not exclusively, the EU and its programmes. This includes the Council of Europe and ECHR¹, EFTA², Erasmus+³, Horizon Europe⁴ and all the other institutions and programmes that serve particular functions. These articles explain the reasons why Greens hold these attitudes and have this pro-European vision, and how this vision fits with our membership of the European Green Party.

¹ European Convention on Human Rights, European Court of Human Rights:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal>;

<https://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home>

² European Free Trade Association (currently Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland) <https://www.efta.int/>

³ EU programme for education, training, youth and sport
<https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>

⁴ EU funding programme for research and innovation,
https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

The section on *Structures* (Existing EU 110-113) was a general statement about what the party (in the 1990s) thought European institutions should be like. In the replacement proposals we have focused on how far, and in what respects, the EU institutions as they currently are approximate to the ideals which we would advocate, and some key ambitions for the improvement of those institutions. These ambitions are based on the policies of the European Green Party with respect to the current debates about the Future of Europe, and focus particularly on improving the democratic legitimacy of the systems.

EU 111 explains the principle of subsidiarity and explains how it follows that we are in favour of decision-making at European level, via democratic institutions that are truly representative, for a wide range of issues that are at the heart of our own commitments as a Green Party.

We propose removing EU 112 and 113 altogether.