

Political Ecologism and Progressive Perspectives in Europe Green Democracy Platform

In recent years, in the wake of the climate emergency, environmental issues have been the center of many movements emerging from below and affecting younger generations especially. In most European countries, green parties have received relevant political support and are active within the institutions. However, can they represent the European *vox populi*? Can they become an alternative to both mainstream neoliberal position and to right-wing parties' proposals? Are they capable of becoming a starting point for a progressive platform in Europe, both for the present and the future? Right now, who is part of this political constellation and who could be part of it in the future?

Citizens, movements, associations, businesses, representative organizations should all play a conscious and active role to proactively lead the green transition. In order for this to happen, it is not enough for the European public policy to change. The €100 billion endowment of the Green Deal is a remarkable investment, but it is not a guarantee that the ecological transition will work for everyone and leave no one behind. Hence, we ask whether the European political culture should change and under what conditions.

To investigate the possible developments of political ecologism through a progressive approach, we would like to look at four themes, in detail:

1- The evolving sustainable political culture (17th May 2021)

How are green parties changing, in Europe as well as in Italy?

Are we moving away from a strict representation of sectorial issues, towards the creation of a Green platform that acts as an inclusive coalition, capable of putting together environmental, economic, social, and gender issues?

2- A green and just transition: for an eco-social coalition (25th May 2021)

How can we respond to this political divide in order to build a genuine eco-social coalition in support of green growth policies?

How can we reconcile, from an "ethics of care" standpoint, the individualistic logic that dominates our economy with sensitive human and environmental needs?

3- Building consensus on political ecology (16th June 2021)

How can the distance between society and institutions be shortened, so that the future transition is not only sustainable, but also democratic?

How can we make sure that those individuals who currently feel unengaged and distant from ecology will become part of the positive transformation we aim to achieve?

4- Green activism: participation and the European environmental culture (13th July 2021)

What can be learned from currently existing movements with regards of broadening participation on ecology?

How can continuity and coordination between citizens and decision-makers be ensured?

The series of webinar will find its conclusion in the context of an International Colloquium (“The Politics to Come”) which will be organized at the headquarters of the Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, on 2-3 October 2021.

A green and just transition: for an eco-social coalition

25 May

15-18

For political ecologism to be central in Europe’s present and future progressive platform, it is necessary to combine the green transition with social inclusion policies, as well as addressing the issue of economic growth. The economic model that we need to rethink is now frowned upon, but in the past, it meant employment opportunities, the possibility of economic growth and redistribution of wealth to large segments of the population, through the creation of new enterprises and businesses. Green transition policies are necessary in order to preserve a safe space for human and non-human activities within ‘planetary boundaries’. However, such policies risk being unfeasible, if they fail to establish a due economic model, capable to properly achieve the greening of production, consumption and exchange patterns. Moreover, they risk being unfair if they do not take into account unequally shared social costs for low and middle classes. This could potentially trigger movements opposing the green transition that far-right parties are likely to exploit, ultimately threatening the social acceptance of the transition itself. Therefore, any due conception of sustainable development cannot ignore the relationship between needed ecological transformations and their socio-economic consequences. For the green economy and social inclusion to be mutually-reinforcing, the old jobs vs. environment conflict should be left behind and a new consensus must be found. To properly discuss these issues, this workshop will address the following questions:

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- As the ecological transition implies short-term concentrated costs and long-term diffused benefits, how can we make sure that all the various interests affected are properly identified, heard and fairly addressed?
- How can we build a genuine eco-social coalition, while effectively tackling existing conflicts?
- How can we reconcile, from an “ethics of care” and ‘intergenerational justice’ standpoint, the individualistic logic that dominates our economy with sensitive human, social and environmental needs, hence building a new social contract for a zero-carbon economy?

CASE-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS (decarbonizing the industrial chain):

- Is it possible to convert climate-altering and polluting industrial productions while also defending existing quality jobs?
- How can we protect vulnerable group in society (women, minorities, and disabled individuals) so that they are not further excluded by these changes?
- How can SMEs manage to reconcile economic profit with green and social sustainability?
- How can we mitigate the jobs vs. environment conflict, bringing together different interests and values in highly polarized sectors and territories, like the Taranto area and its energy-intensive industries? How could new EU-derived opportunities like the Recovery and Resilience Facility or the Just Transition Mechanism be exploited to this end?

Programme

15.00 – 15.05

Welcome: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli

15.05 – 15.15

Opening speech: For an eco-social coalition: Luciano Fasano (Chair of First Webinar)

15.15 – 17.15

Quo vadis? A debate on actors, programmatic ideas and political alliances

17.15 – 18.00

Conclusion: three shared concrete proposals for an eco-progressive platform

Invitation List

1. **Mireille Alphonse**, Deputy Mayor of Montreuil
2. **Jens Althoff**, Heinrich Boll Stiftung
3. **Mario Agostinelli**, Associazione Laudato Si'
4. **Anne Chapman**, Green House Think Thank
5. **Enrica Chiappero**, Università di Pavia
6. **Luigi Di Marco**, ASVIS (Alleanza Italiana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile)
7. **Eleonora Evi**, MEP from the Green Group
8. **Elena Grandi**, public speaker of Federazione Verdi
9. **Jules Herbert**, Heinrich Boll Stiftung
10. **Maria Kaika**, University of Amsterdam
11. **Anna Kyriazi**, Università degli Studi di Milano
12. **Benoit Monange**, Fondation de l'Écologie Politique
13. **Najma Mohamed**, Green Economy Coalition
14. **Ralph Obermaier**, IG Metall (Dept. General Policy and Sociopolitical Issues)
15. **Elke Pirgmaier**, Université de Lausanne
16. **Luca Visentini**, Segretario Generale CES (Confederazione europea dei sindacati)
17. **Luana Zanella**, Federazione dei Verdi