

Individual supporters fringe meeting 11-04-2008 in Ljubljana

14 Participants; Mieke Fleurackers (Groen! Belgium), Maire McCormack (Scottish Green Party), Mark Deckers (Groen! Belgium), Johan Hamels (EGP committee), Tom Van Der Wal (GroenLinks), Inti Suarez (GroenLinks), Bas Eickhout (GroenLinks), Ron Zeefat (GroenLinks), Niels Fisher (Bündnis90/Die Grünen Germany), Didier Coeurnelle (Écolo Belgium), Marianne Saenen É (Écolo), Lin Tabak (GroenLinks), Hans Beat Schaffner (Swiss Greens), Remco van der Stoep (GroenLinks).

Update Individual Supportership:

The Scottish Greens' party council has agreed to introduce the individual supportership, Écolo has launched active recruitment just over a month ago. The executive of Groen! is seriously considering to introduce the IS, and to open registration once a new database for membership registration has been put into place – which should be one of these weeks. And the Luxemburg Greens (Dèi Grèng) have reaffirmed a previous promise to make all their members EGP supporters.

To date

- 6 parties have adopted the Individual Supportership: GroenLinks, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, Les Verts, Écolo, the Green Party of England and Wales, the Irish Green party/Comhaontas Glas, Groen!
- 2 parties are about to introduce the scheme: Groen!, Dèi Grèng
- almost 1200 individual supporters have been registered, in 4 parties: GroenLinks (about 1000), Écolo (over 150), Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (some 25), the Green Party of England and Wales (15)

Individual Supporters' Group-in-the-making

Till now the IS fringe has been organised by the Heerlen Group, uniting individual supporters and supporters-to-be of some 10 Green parties. Since the Vienna council (Oct. 2007) the group has been moving towards a working group status within the EGP. Due to a lack of time however, the talks won't be finalised until the next council, so till then the group will be working as the *EGP Individual Supporters Group in the making*. The European elections being only just over a year away however, it will continue the work on its main short term project: *getting 10.000 campaigners for 2009*, cooperating closely with the committee and the common campaign team.

Work in Progress – suggestions & initiatives

This being said, the Group has gratefully accepted the following suggestions put forward by the participants, as valuable additions to the project and its implementation.

- *Introduction manual*: Once parties have registered supporters, and sent their names to the EGP office, the supporters will receive an (almost weekly) Flash Update. Several parties felt a strong need for

have more support, like advice on how to administer the scheme, on the exact duties, rights and other rules (whom to accept, with supporters will get from whom, what they are allowed to do etc.). Such advice will be provided a.s.a.p., and be included in a little guide for parties on how best to start implementation. That guide also will contain an *introduction package* in English for new supporters, consisting of 1. a brief history of the Green parties in Europe, 2. A concise history of the EGP, 3. A survey of what you can expect in return for your fee (€ 12,-), and how you can participate. And it will be accompanied by a clear plan of how the fees are spent (see also below) – details of the latter will be proposed during the next EGP council.

- *Supporters' fees*: Johan Hamels suggested that Parties starting to implement the IS, could keep part of the fees for administering it. This would be contradictory to the resolution voted in Dublin (2004), Lin Tabak argued, because that resolution states that all fees should be transferred to Brussels and put aside to be spent for EGP supporters' - because grassroots register to support the common project, not the project back home, and because the scheme was adopted to counterbalance the focus on home affairs which prevails in most parties. Opening the door to home spending would weaken that effect. Schotland and Écolo, just having agreed on that basis, added that Hamels' proposal would put a precedent, and that all are better off with a clear financial rule like the Dublin resolution.
- *Call from EGP committee to parties*: The Group repeatedly receives requests from active supporters (from GPE, Los Verdes, etc.) to write an official letter to their parties to remind them of their YES to the IS in Rome (2004) and the implicate promise made to their members by agreeing to it. So we have repeated it here. The Committee letter should stress the importance of individual participation in the common campaign. Johan Hamels promises to do his very best to answer the demand a.s.a.p.
- *10.000 fund raisers* for 2009: The supporters will, Johan Hamels announced, be addressed by the common campaign team. They might not only become active campaigners, but also play a role as fund raisers for that campaign.
- *Connecting the European to the local*: The IS Group doesn't only address European minded Greens. Through them, it reaches out to locally active Greens, by setting up a Cross Border Relay Tour – linking local cross border actions on local themes with a cross border dimension. Those greens might then be tempted to participate in the common campaign as well. All those are invited to the **Cross Border Kick-off 2009, in Kleve (Germany), 31 May 2008**. For details, see the IS Working Plan or www.greenyourope.net. Several initiatives were suggested, like:
 - *Grenzenlos Grün* is a joint German-Austrian initiative against the Zürich Airport (Hans Beat Schaffner). Although the Swiss

- Greens don't participate in the common EU campaign, they might like to join just to get public attention.
- *New Town Green*, dealing with problems linked to dormitory towns (Tom van der Wal)
 - *A Latvian delegate* later told us it would be worth considering a joint action by Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish Greens against renewing the nuclear power plant at Ignalina, near the Polish/Lithuanian border. With Germany on the Zürich airport issue. We will invite these people to Kleve.
 - Inti Suarez will build & manage a web page linked to our site (presently www.greenyourope.net) showing these initiatives, their progress and how they fit into the overall plan. New (and existing) initiatives can be reported to inti@scicha.org
- *Directly joining the EGP* without passing through a member party (Hans Beat Schaffner): this desire is expressed at almost every IS workshop – each time by someone else and from a different party. As it is as legal a desire as that of the parties protecting themselves against possible political enemies entering through the European door, it should be discussed by the EGP council at some point.

Report: Mieke Fleurackers and Lin Tabak