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Vienna, 2004
2nd European Meeting of Green Local Councillors

"Greening the Cities in the European Union"
Vienna, December 5th - 7th, 2003

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Vienna - starting point for local green networking

Monika Vana
City councillor and deputy chairperson of the Green Group in Vienna:

The 2nd European Meeting of Green Local Councillors has been organized by the Viennese Greens together with the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament and the European Federation of Green Parties (EFGP). Around 300 participants both from Western and Eastern Europe gathered at the meeting, among them several mayors, deputy mayors, members of executive bodies in cities, and local councillors. They came from cities with millions of inhabitants and capitals as well as small villages. There were delegations from 31 countries altogether.

The goal of the meeting was a pan-European exchange of ideas and experience on successes and challenges of green local politics in the context of EU enlargement and the constitutional process.

The Greens are already members of governments in several countries in Europe. European local policy is more and more influenced by Green ideas and concepts. The conference of the Green local councillors just a few months before the EU enlargement was an opportunity to show various common areas of interest between politics at the EU level and local politics.

The meeting focused on requirements applying to a Green European policy viewed from the local and municipal level, but also on crucial questions like the future of public services, global neo-liberalism and challenges for a Green labour-market policy. The circumstances in which the realization of Green ideas and projects in the cities can be achieved were also examined.

The Vienna meeting not only led to effective networking among the several thousand Green local politicians in Europe’s cities and municipalities, but also helped to find a consensus on some contents of local politics. This resulted in a resolution that I tabled at the founding congress of the European Green Party in Rome and that was adopted on 22nd February, 2004 (see page 89/90).

The local level is the basis on which the strength of the Greens relies. The meeting in Vienna reinforced and showed the significance of the political work on this level. The 3rd Meeting of European Green Local Councillors is going to take place in 2006, probably in Barcelona.

Further information:
http://www.wien.gruene.at/conference03/index.html
GREENING THE CITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
2nd European Meeting of Green Local Councillors, Vienna, December 2003

Eva Glawischnig
MP of Die Grünen Austria and deputy chairperson of the Green Group:

There’s always plenty of variety here in the Austria Center, but today sets a new record - and I’m delighted to have the privilege of opening this Meeting. Originally I intended to say one sentence in each language represented among the participants today; but as those taking part come from Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the USA and Austria, a good thirty languages would have been involved, which would have held us up rather.

I am particularly happy to welcome our friends from the new member states of the European Union. This welcome has a firm basis in law: the Austrian Parliament ratified the Treaty of Accession two days ago.

What brings us together? I think there are two main aspects. One is our shared system of values, at the European level and globally. Protecting the environment, an orientation towards ecological sustainability, solidarity, a radical orientation towards democracy and peace - those are the values that bring us together on a visionary level; but we are also in touch in our everyday work in the community, implementing, getting on with things, shaping - not just vision, but hands-on activity as well.

It’s most encouraging that we have a number of politicians - men and women - among us today who have already achieved great things; the cities have always been the cradle of green politics, and perhaps I may mention a local success of the Greens’ in Austria: we have always focussed on the cities, and looked rather enviously to Helsinki, where the Greens have got over 23% of the vote - well, this year’s regional election the Greens in Tyrol managed 27% in the regional capital, Innsbruck, and I see that as a signal for the future of Europe.

A special thank-you to the Greens in Vienna, who put incredible enthusiasm into organizing the Meeting and making it a success; on behalf of us all I’d like to thank the team responsible, Monika Vana, Gerhard Jordan, Heike Wärmuth and Ulrike Eckerstorfer, most warmly.

Well done!

Arnold Cassola
Secretary General of the EFGP (European Federation of Green Parties):

On behalf of the Organization Committee of the European Greens I cordially welcome you to our Meeting. It isn’t our first visit to Vienna; the Green Local Council Members are meeting here for the second time. I well recall our first meeting in June 1996, in conjunction with the first Congress of the European Green Parties. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then. Seven years have gone by, and while I am no longer a councillor in Malta as I was then, while we have all aged seven years and my hair has got thin, the Austrian Greens have gone from strength to strength, making gains in national, provincial and local elections, which has turned the Austrian Greens into one of the leading Green Parties in Europe and an example to all of us of how Green successes are to be achieved.

It was an excellent idea of the Austrians’ to hold this meeting, particularly as we are on the threshold of enlarging the European Union. In a few months’ time hundreds of Green members of local councils in four neighbouring states, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, together with the three Baltic states and Poland, plus a handful from Malta and Cyprus, will join the thousands of Green members of local councils in the European Union. Nor do we wish to forget the other Green members of local councils in the Ukraine and other regions outside the EU.

The Greens are represented in the EU Commission by Michaele Schreyer, we have been and are today represented in governments, currently in Latvia and Germany, we are present in parliaments, provincial administrations and assemblies - but none of that would be possible without our being accessible to the men and women of our communities. That is the place where most of the
Dear Green friends, Europe's future lies in the cities - and the cities' future lies in the EU. In the name of the Vienna Greens I welcome you most warmly to our conference on "Greening European Cities". As one of the initiators of this conference, I'm delighted that so many of you have travelled here.

Eva Glawischnig has already referred to it: there are people here from more than 100 cities and 31 countries, including numerous Green mayors and deputy mayors, and we are very happy that our idea of communal networking at the European level has caught on so well and aroused such enthusiasm, and that so many people are here.

From left to right: Maria Vassilakou (Vienna), Arnold Cassola (EFGP, Malta), Eva Glawischnig (Austria).

Monika Vana
City councillor and deputy chairperson of the Green Group in Vienna:

Dear Green friends, Europe's future lies in the cities - and the cities' future lies in the EU. In the name of the Vienna Greens I welcome you most warmly to our conference on "Greening European Cities". As one of the initiators of this conference, I'm delighted that so many of you have travelled here.

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We want to connect Greens together throughout Europe. At city level, foreign policy is becoming more and more important. In Europe city foreign policy is not sufficiently firmly rooted yet. Everyone is aware of the Europe of the regions, but there is still not enough awareness of the Europe of the cities.

We want to change that. In the next three days we want to bring European city politics right to the centre of our political discussions, and I wish you and us three gripping, rewarding and enjoyable days in Vienna.
Good evening to everyone here. I’m very pleased to be here myself - when the Austrian Greens proposed organizing this conference in Vienna, I wasn’t just glad, I was ecstatic about this initiative, because my belief (from my European point of view) is that activities at the local and regional levels are becoming more and more important, and can help to ensure the success of our policies at the European level. The idea of enhancing a network of locally elected representatives by creating an awareness of, interest in and familiarity with the policies that are debated and implemented in Europe seems to me to deserve top priority. At the same time I suspect that one reason for this is that we may perhaps sometimes feel rather lonely in the European Parliament. However, I do feel that the work we have done in recent years in collaboration with friends principally from Italy, Belgium and Spain (those are the three countries that I have cooperated with most) have made it clear that we are much more efficient and much more credible if we can count on a team of local councillors who are visible within the institutions and can easily be mobilized for the kind of policies we stand for in Europe. I think that one of the few desirable consequences of the treaty of Maastricht is that all EU citizens are now entitled to elect their representatives both in the European Parliament and in local government in every single EU member state; and I also think that this linking up of the citizens of Europe on the basis of shared electoral rights needs to be underwritten in a suitable way in our political family, too.

In this spirit I thank, on behalf of the Greens in the European Parliament, both the people who have organized this meeting and all the participants, and I wish you enjoyable working during the next two days.
Later on, about twelve years ago, I became a council member in my city, within the framework of an alliance with the Socialist Party (like quite a lot of us). When an alliance of this kind is agreed, it automatically ushers in a difficult phase, since people see it as costing the Greens some of their independence. But if you can show consistently that you remain true to your goals, you will find that people notice that you are not abandoning your principles, and that you continue to keep your promises (in contrast to others). That is crucial to subsequent success and to gaining people’s trust, which is after all the main thing.

Now to local government in Lausanne, with a seven-member city government and the special Swiss system of electing each member separately. In our case the mayor is elected directly too, and as I had obtained by far the most votes it was only natural that I became mayor.

But in a situation like that you have to get people with very different political backgrounds, some of them quite incompatible, to cooperate with each other. And that makes things very interesting, because ordinary citizens, as soon as they disagree with a project, instantly take up arms - here the favourite weapons of the Swiss: referendum and initiative. So you are permanently involved in interactions with the general public’s concerns.

The Greens, who have made the most skilful use of these tools of direct democracy in this context, are trusted more and more, and today I think back to all the dossiers with which we have achieved quite a few successes, particularly in the field of transport; we are certainly far from perfect there, but there have been considerable improvements - several districts have been traffic-calmed, and public transport has been made more efficient. And in the energy field Lausanne gets the best marks of any city in Switzerland from the Federal Energy Department (Office Fédéral de l’Energie). After all, in several sectors we have achieved results that we have no reason to feel ashamed of.

Daniel Brélaz
Mayor of Lausanne (Switzerland):
I'd like to present some projects and measures that have been realized since Greens are taking part in the governing of Paris:

Yves Contassot, Les Verts, Deputy Mayor of Paris:

In Paris we have a municipal program for gardens, for collective gardens as we call them, which can be used in common...
and which provide for social links in a city which does not encourage human contact much. Then there are the so-called "white nights": that means that one night long people can enter areas that are normally closed off, such as cultural facilities. Hundreds of thousands of people take part. Then there is "Paris on the beach", i.e. people have the opportunity to move along the Seine. Then of course there are lots of programs involving the large numbers of artists in Paris. An important development covers art in the street, the circus, popular art, everything that had dropped out of sight.

We still have some unfinished business with our friends Chirac & Co., namely to ensure much more openness about subsidies and grants, about allocating accommodation and such things. We're far from having achieved all that we are aiming at. Then we are also anxious to include foreigners from outside the EU, a special council has been set up for this. It is possible to vote in district referenda, regardless of whether you are French or not and how long you have lived there. Then there are consultation processes on long-term development, including Agenda 21, it will take some time to sort everything out.

We have lots of programs concerned with making access to various facilities easier for people with physical handicaps. We have a Green mayor in the second district of Paris, things go quicker there than elsewhere. There is a cultural problem with the representatives of capital and labour. If you talk about urban ecology, about the need for ecological education, about keeping animals in cities, you run into a brick wall of indifference - people make fun of us then and have no time for such issues.

As regards questions of public security, prostitution, drug problems, there is still wide disagreement; there is a Home Secretary who flirts with the far right, and the Socialist Party, who believe they lost the national election in June 2002 because they did not pay sufficient attention to security issues. But to sum up, I may say that the Greens in Paris have about 12% of the vote, gradually increasing, and we have succeeded in implementing some of our policies. We have started to tackle things in a new way, and public discussion in Paris centres on

issues that the Greens have launched: culture, the environment, transport.

We still lag behind other cities in France and abroad - I'm convinced of this, and it will take some time for us to catch up. Even if Paris is often mentioned as an example in France, that is unfair in comparison with the Greens' work in other cities.

The way in which the Greens who have been elected work involves not constantly trimming one's sails with an eye to the next election, because we are under pressure from the media, under social pressure, under pressure in terms of consumption. We can disregard the next moment and look around at new horizons. I believe that what we are doing today is important, for in comparison with the other political parties we are virtually the only ones who swap experiences here in France, in Europe. All the other parties toil away on their own, and my belief is that the Greens are acquiring considerable capital for the future in this way.

Thank you very much.

Reply to a question from the audience on public transport in Paris:

If we want to have fewer cars in Paris, we must simply give them less room. In other words: We narrow the carriageways. We separate lanes off for buses and taxis, we widen the pavements, we create special routes for cars passing through Paris in transit, so that they can't just zoom through the city, and we also build a tramway. Then we set up parking facilities for cycles - these are free of charge. We need a certain amount of time to get these projects off the ground, and we are squeezed financially, too, since the Socialists had (for tactical reasons) proclaimed that the status quo would not be interfered with. And the legacy of the previous right-wing mayor was quite a problem for us, we can't implement everything as quickly as we might imagine.
Hallo, I’m glad to be here and grateful for the European Greens’ invitation. I’d like to say a few words about our experience in Barcelona, starting with the city and our administration. Barcelona has 1.5 million inhabitants and an area of 100 km². Since 1979 we have had a left-wing alliance between Socialists, the Green Initiative for Catalonia, my party, and (since 1995) the Republican Left of Catalonia. At the last election on 25th May 2003 we got five councillors, three men and two women, 12% of the votes went to us, we have a Deputy Mayoress, that’s me. I’m responsible for sustainability, city services and the environment, I head the energy department in Barcelona and am also responsible for the city parks and gardens.

In this administration we have three main aims: We want more equality, more sustainability and more participation. Let’s start with the first aim: a city with more equality. We have succeeded in tying in middle-class society with its associations. We’ve set up a consultative committee, and also a home help arrangement for elderly people. It currently covers 6,500 people, roughly 2% of the population is taken care of - we want to reach 4% in 2007 and 8% in 2009.

In our city there is a major problem: 12% of the population are below the poverty line, which we don’t want. As far as migration to Barcelona is concerned, we want to implement our communal migration plan, which is the result of an all-party agreement between the parties in the administration and those in opposition. The communal plan for access for the physically handicapped is due for implementation, too. Next, providing council accommodation: in 2000-2003 roughly 25,000 flats were built, 60% by us. The national government and the regional administration did practically nothing in this field, but we came to meet the demand halfway. That is why we have built these flats with an eye to urban development - low-rent housing, flats for young people and the elderly to rent. We have also lowered running expenses by means of low-energy housing. Initially we were in a clinch with the Socialists, who disagreed with the whole idea - but we are adamant that the housing program must take this criterion seriously.

The second aim is getting a city in which one can live longer and better. We have five strategies: city planning for sustainability, mobility, efficient administration of the natural resources, consolidating individual districts and tying in the green elements of the urban environment. I may just go into two of these strategies in more detail. Energy strategy and the ecological elements. In Barcelona we have a branch of the "Procured" campaign, which contributes to getting the city administration to work in a greener way. And it’s very satisfactory that they play along.

Now to energy strategy: Until 1999 there were no statutory regulations of this kind. In 1999 we approved a by-law on solar energy systems in the City of Barcelona. Since then, the surface of erected solar panels has grown from 1,650 m² to over 15,000 m². Political determination succeeded in overcoming the resistance, and other cities - Madrid, Sevilla - followed our example.

But we want to go further. In 2002 the Energy Plan covered 55 measures and programs, which I haven’t time to explain in detail. With energy saving and efficient
My dear colleagues in local politics, dear friends from the old and the new Europe, I greet everyone taking part and the hosts of this Meeting. I’m happy to be here to report on our concerns and successes in the field of protecting nature and the environment in Pécs (which used to be called Fünfkirchen) in Southern Hungary. Pécs has about 160,000 inhabitants and is one of the most beautiful cities in Hungary, with Mediterranean flair and climate. None the less it was, ten years ago, one of the seven most polluted cities in Hungary.

The local Greens and other civil organizations initiated a development process in which the self-government of our city also played an essential part. And the third priority: we want more participation in our city. Our agenda should be available to everyone. We have a distinctive logo, and Agenda 21 means people are included and everyone can join in and support the overall aims. By signing the pact you commit yourself, first, to working in this organization and to taking these aims seriously, and second, to working out the plans of action. Each association or other organization must draw up a plan of action, from the Council to the smallest club.

The issue of whether immigrants should have the right to vote is a question of participation, too. It isn’t easy to suggest that to the council, since the Socialists and their party are often at loggerheads with us and want something quite different.

The tourists who visit us discover artists ranging from the expressionist Csontváry to Victor Vasarely, and a stock of ceramics left from the Zsolnay factory. The Mecsek uplands in the south, by Lake Balaton in the north, by the Danube in the east and the Drava in the west.

The surroundings of Pécs are rich in minerals, which also make the spa waters efficacious. As the leading figures in the city and the county are aware, health tourism is economically important for us. That is why mining in the Mecsek mountains has been stopped; the use of energy, energy consumption should go down by 17% by 2010 and CO₂ emissions by 20%.

And the third priority: we want more participation in our city. Our agenda should be available to everyone. We have a distinctive logo, and Agenda 21 means people working for sustainability - that isn’t just a phrase, it isn’t a matter purely for the Council, it affects the whole city of Barcelona. We have already signed a pact with ten targets; agreements can be made with particular committees, and then the whole issue is discussed in the ten city districts. 355 city institutions and associations have already signed this pact. Universities, environmental organizations, schools, representatives of civil society and the council itself have of course also joined up. Agenda 21 means that people are included and everyone can join in and support the overall aims. By signing the pact you commit yourself, first, to working in this organization and to taking these aims seriously, and second, to working out the plans of action. Each association or other organization must draw up a plan of action, from the Council to the smallest club.

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mines are closed, the wounds inflicted on nature are being healed, and the area is being entrusted to nature again.

After this introduction I’d like to explain what the local Greens in Pécs and the surrounding area want - and what they don’t want. We are very proud of having got rid of the hazardous waste deposit in the community of Garay (south of Pécs). We achieved this with the help of the local people and by means of a determined stand against governments of many different hues, from the Democratic Forum and the Socialists to the government of the conservative FIDESZ party. While the Socialists were in power, a local Socialist politician together with Ms. Madeleine Petrovic of the Austrian Greens began negotiations about the future of the community of Garay, which is inhabited mainly by Croats. But it took a long time to find a solution. In the end the issue was resolved while the previous government was in power. With German help the material was incinerated, and the contaminated soil was replaced. Many people remember that some of the containers went astray in transit to Vienna: something we must apologize for even at this late stage.

15 km from Pécs, on the site of an abandoned mine, it was planned to set up a facility for recycling lead accumulators and a lead smelter. In spite of internal differences we succeeded in preventing the project; in the end the arguments of the small settlements prevailed, which promoted boosting village tourism and preserving natural values.

Then there are various current issues to report on. We oppose setting up a NATO radar station on the top of the Mecsek mountains; an alliance has been formed between the civil organizations in the region and the Green Democrats. The plan is to erect this military facility in a protected area; which aroused opposition from local councils and civil groups - these expected support from the Green Democrats. The latter’s local branch immediately got in touch with Elisabeth Schroedter, Member of the European Parliament, who then publicly stated, while personally negotiating in Pécs, that she will initiate the cancellation of NATO’s financial support for this project. The Green Democrats’ local branch continues to follow the course of events with close attention, and to negotiate with representatives of the Ministry of Defence.

The Pécs power station will be converted to biomass in 2004, on the basis of an agreement with two forestry organizations and some large farms (the Green Democrats were involved in coordinating this); instead of coal firing, gas turbines will deliver power, so air pollution will be reduced significantly. The Green Democrats and the management of the power station will keep the population informed about the advantages of converting to biomass.

In August 2002 a number of representatives of the Green Democrats held a joint demonstration with several environmental NGOs on the Drava, against the construction of a hydropower plant on the Croatian side of the river.

Vilmos Heiszler (translator, left) and János Kittl (City government member of Pécs, Hungary).
The Croatian Greens also took part in this demonstration. As a result of this action a forum was set up in Barcs, near the border, with representatives of the Croatian and Hungarian governments, the planners responsible for the power station, Hungarian environmental NGOs, representatives of the Danube-Drava National Park and of the Green Democrats; the participants have explained their standpoints to each other, and several rounds of negotiations have taken place. At the most recent meeting the Croatian partner indicated that it might be possible to do without this power plant, but the Croatians regard further discussion as essential.

As regards safeguarding our water supply, we have access to sources of finance from the EU, to help isolate water contaminated with uranium and to complete the city’s drain system. Investment will start in 2004. When the application was submitted, Alexander De Roo, Green Member of European Parliament, visited Pécs in person, negotiated with the managers of the uranium mine and studied in situ the problems mentioned in the application. As a result of his involvement the European Greens’ recommendation was instrumental in securing the success of the application.

So that’s what we have achieved so far, and what we aim to achieve in the future. To finish, I should say something about what we Hungarian Greens want to do for the region around Baranya. We’d like to get ecotourism really going: we have a tradition of making good wine, spas and village tourism are regaining their earlier reputation, which can assure employment and income to the local people while giving visitors pleasure and recreation. We shall have to work hard if this sector is to achieve real success in our region, with support from the EU regional fund and from our own government. When our tourist sector gets off the ground, we want new hotels and guest-houses to be built nearby and village tourism developed to a point where the spectre of unemployment disappears.

Many thanks for your attention - I should point out, though, that we shall need more of your support if we are to reach our goals.

Thank you very much.

John Gormley
MP and ex-Mayor of Dublin (Ireland):

I am very grateful to the Austrian Greens and the Greens in the European Parliament for organizing this event. I think it is very worthwhile that we exchange ideas on what is happening at local level. It’s the old phrase of the Greens “thinking globally, acting locally”. At events like this I often feel envious to see other countries’ local government systems, because in Ireland we don’t really have local government. What we have is local administration. Unfortunately local councillors have very little power. What we have is just symbolic.

When I was Mayor of Dublin, nine years back, this was a rather symbolic rôle, too. The Greens had a great success in 1991 in the local elections and we formed a "rainbow coalition" on Dublin’s city council with parties with similar views. We worked out a program that was quite progressive and enabled us to do a lot of good
things for the city. Although we don’t have that much power. The little power local councillors do have is in the area of environmental policy, because many years ago the environment was not regarded as important. So give them power, so they cannot muck up very much when it comes to it.

So we looked at all the legislation and we looked what we can actually do. What had urgently needed doing was cleaning up Dublin Bay. Dublin Bay is fantastic, there are several beaches, but it was also polluted because lots of sewage was being discharged straight into the bay. So what we decided was to have the very best sewage treatment. As a result of that we have a waste water treatment plan, and a treatment facility that is considered to be the best in the world. The beaches around the bay were given blue flag rating, which means swimming quality. You can see the difference, because wildlife is coming back into the bay too - birds, you can even see seals. People are pleased and know that the Greens were very much involved in that.

Another thing I wanted to do as Lord Mayor was to provide more cycle-ways in the city. So I set up the Lord Mayor’s commission on cycling. Until then we had cycle-ways, but they were designed by road engineers who never sat on a bicycle in their lives. That had to change. In collaboration with colleagues abroad we arranged to have a number of Dutch specialists come over. We agreed that they have the best cycle-ways, and we had meetings twice a month. The cycle-ways we now have are much better. The only problem now is that the cycle-ways come into the city, but in the center they stop. The traders didn’t want to have cycle-ways, because they would take parking space away. We hope that after the forthcoming local elections we shall have more Greens on the city council and as a result more and better cycle-ways. Among our minor achievements we gave grants to companies who were insulating the homes of the elderly to make them more energy-efficient.

Waste management is an important area. We introduced a system of recycling which was extremely popular, but then central government decided that they didn’t want to invest in it any further. That led to a waste crisis, and the government planned eight incineration plants. As Ireland is relatively small, we think this is really over the top. We have over-capacity. The incineration plant they are now planning for Dublin is designed to handle 750,000 tons a year. They say they recycle 60%. We don’t believe those figures. 97,000 tons will be left to be incinerated, and we have the capacity for 750,000 tons, which just doesn’t make sense. We want to do is to explore the option of "zero waste". We saw the problems of nuclear power and we avoided it locally: There is no nuclear industry in our country. Zero waste is feasible. I have seen it myself in small cities like Galway and Limerick.

One of the problems of local government is that local government cannot raise its own revenue. We don’t have any charges for water usage, say. The idea may be unpopular, but the Greens have always said the polluter pays principle has to apply; however, parties on the Left are totally opposed to this in our country. Similarly there is a campaign against waste charges. On the city council we have been voting with parties on the Right in favour of waste charges. We want these waste charges to be used for integrated waste management and particularly for recycling. But we now fear that, once the incinera-
tion plant is built, the money will go straight into incineration. What we would like to see is reform of local government, real power to raise revenue, powers to make more decisions than now. With the sort of centralized system we have most of the power resides in the National Parliament. And even in parliament things can be extremely frustrating, because most decisions are taken in cabinet itself. So when we talk about subsidiarity, it doesn’t only mean devolving power to national governments, it also means going beyond that: decision-making at the lowest effective level.

European and local elections are due on 11th June 2004 and we are confident that we can do well, particularly in Dublin, which has a very good green vote. We are looking forward to greater Green representation on the city council and I wish the European Greens the very best for the coming elections.

Thank you very much.

Reply to a question from the audience about corruption in the city administration:

That was a really vital issue for the Greens. When we were elected to the council in 1991, it was regarded as perfectly natural for planning permission to be granted in return for cash. In practice these deals were made at a table in some pub or other - that was absolutely normal. When we arrived, we said that was pure corruption. When farming land receives planning permission millions of Euro are involved. The cheques were sent by mail, and at a council meeting one of my colleagues got up and said “Maybe some of the gentlemen present have received a cheque like that too”. Three council members then knocked him down from behind: the start of a far-reaching investigation into corruption. A lawyer then put a full-page advertisement in the paper, asking for clues to other cases of corruption. In the meantime we have had a whole series of judicial investigations. Last week one of the politicians concerned, an ex-Foreign Secretary, was fined two million Euro, and one of the civil servants was imprisoned. We triggered the whole thing off. At the last election we put up posters with the slogan “Green politics - clean politics”, and we noticed the effect - lots of people voting Green in Dublin. But the judicial investigations are still in progress.
We now come to the central theme of our conference: ”Cities and the European Union”. 80% of the citizens of the EU live in towns and cities. Today we shall be concerned with issues such as: How much scope for action do cities have in the EU? To what extent are cities affected by EU policy in the form of deregulation, privatisation and liberalization, or by the Euro stability pact? We ask how we can strengthen cooperation between city politicians and EU politicians, what perspectives of Green European policy for cities we can develop, and what we can all contribute to cross-linking.

Let me briefly introduce our high-grade panel, going from left to right: Philippe Debry, you are Deputy Mayor of Anderlecht, near Brussels, and you will tell us quite a bit about local politics in the Brussels area - you are here instead of Henri Simons, who is prevented by illness from attending. Then Jana Drapalová, city councillor in Brno and since 2002 also District Mayor in Brno-Nový Lískovec. She will tell us something about the work in progress on cross-linking Brno and other cities, which she has been engaged in for years now. Then Johannes Voggenhuber, Member of the EU Parliament and now heading the Austrian Green list for the EU parliamentary election. You were responsible for land use, architecture, transport and various other things in the Salzburg city administration from 1982 to 1987, so you too have a close relationship with local politics. Then I welcome Mats Pertoft to the panel, Deputy Mayor of Södertälje in Sweden since 2002. Then Angela Spizig, Deputy Mayor of Cologne and member of the coalition between the Greens and the CDU. And finally Daniel Cohn-Bendit, MEP, who doesn’t really need any introduction. You have also helped to govern a city, Frankfurt am Main, since 1989.
Angela Spizig
Deputy Mayor of Cologne, Die Grünen Germany:

I want to concentrate on three topics: community, Europe and above all Green. Cologne is very Europe-oriented; it is the fourth largest city in Germany, originally founded by the Romans, and for 2,000 years waves of migrants have continually been entering the city. Now it is a multicultural city with one million inhabitants, 20% of whom are migrants from 180 different countries, i.e. pretty colourful. Cologne has the advantage of a central location (though I won’t stress the cliché of the heart of Europe). Cologne is well positioned as regards European politics. We have a very competent European Office attached to the Lord Mayor’s department. If Frieder Wolf has already arrived, I welcome him here most warmly; he is the head of this European Office - a Green head. Then Cologne has a Green Mayor with a very strong European profile; it helps to be fluent in more than one language, particularly in connexion with cross-linking. A lot of networks have their headquarters in Paris.

Cologne stands for active cross-linking. That’s going to be the central theme - it started back in the Middle Ages, when Cologne was part of a league of Rhineland cities, and carried on into the Hanseatic League.

Now I want to discuss some city networks that might be of interest for you, too, that are highly relevant to communal issues and that could stand a great deal of Green involvement. Cologne is very much part of Eurocities - our colleague from Brno will be talking about that - and two years ago Cologne actually directed an appeal to the EU Convention together with eleven other mayors, to get community political aims into the Constitution. The leading community associations have also gone into action, as has CEMR, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, which I regard as a very important network - unfortunately there are only a handful of Greens in the German section, which gives entirely the wrong impression of our commitment to community politics.

So there is plenty of room for improvement there. As far as I am aware, not many Greens take part in CEMR at the European level, either. I myself am on the Women’s Affairs Committee, where I’m trying to use our Green statute on the treatment of women as a way of getting more women into Parliaments across Europe. This approach meets with the committee’s full approval.

Of course there is the German Association of Cities; then there are two interesting networks concerned with E-government and with the new technologies - and I know that we Greens are very competent in this field. These networks will be increasingly important in future, so lots of Greens should get involved there, any number of mayors, Green members of city administrations. On the one hand there is Telecities, and on the other Global Cities Dialogue (with its headquarters in Paris), which has set itself the goals of exchanging best-practice models and of bridging the digital gap - not just across Europe, but worldwide. After all, there is a social gap between people with and without access to the internet, and there is also a geographical gap.

Another network is POLIS; the Greens on the Cologne Council have a member in the upper echelons there, too - the issues there are mobility, transport, energy and the environment. If we do a good job at the community level and cross-link our activities throughout Europe, our opportunities to bring forward our concerns at the European level will improve. Something that might perhaps serve as a model for various other countries - in Germany a network called "Grünkom" exists to link the Green
I am the deputy mayor of Södertälje, a town south of Stockholm with nearly 80,000 inhabitants. I’m also on the national executive of the Swedish Greens, where I’m responsible for community issues. Before I talk about the EU I want to sketch the Swedish political landscape (we are not as visible here in Central Europe): The political landscape is made up of seven parties, from the Conservative Party to the left-wing ex-communists. The Greens are a pretty small party, but we have a great deal of influence. On 18% of the local councils - we have about 270 local councils in Sweden - the Greens are part of majority coalitions; that also includes the major cities of Stockholm and Gothenburg.

A special feature of Swedish politics is the wide responsibilities of the local councils, which are fully responsible for education, schools, child welfare, old people, the environment, construction, transport, etc. We keep getting more responsibilities. Central government is unwilling to economize, so it forces the cities and towns to economize. Angela touched on this. Every year we negotiate with the government about sharing tax revenue out. The principle “Whoever calls the tune pays the piper” has in the meantime become law in Sweden, but views on how far to push that differ.

Cross-linking is the key issue for our cities. In Sweden we are just constructing separate Green networks, and I’m at work on cross-linking the Greens throughout Sweden; we urgently need a net-
I’d like to start by pointing out two problem areas that threaten communal politics: First, council housing. I don’t know exactly what the current state is, as I don’t keep up with the European discussion in detail, but there has been talk of restricting the provinces’ and regions’ capability of financing council housing. If that comes to pass, the results would be really dramatic.

The second problem area: large cities such as Brussels always have to battle with traffic, particularly with lorries in the city. In some cities, such as Paris, lorries above a certain weight limit are not allowed to drive into town. Brussels lags behind here, but we’re working on it. The last thing I want is for a rule to be made in the name of freedom of movement that municipalities are no longer allowed to ban through traffic.

About the situation in the Brussels area: I shall now describe Europe not as an executive or legislative body, but as a property owner. You’re aware that most of the European institutions are in Brussels, near the center. At that time, the decision was taken to put the EU offices either slap in the middle of town or very close to the centre, in what used to be a residential district. Of course we can’t blame Europe for that - local politicians were responsible. Since 1958 there have been a long sequence of developments. Originally there was only one big settlement, but by now practically an entire district has been wrecked by expressways and motorways. Quite a number of houses were simply demolished to make way for miles of motorway through idyllic landscapes. This is not the way we Greens were against. Instead, a toll system will be introduced this year. That is one of the biggest successes the Greens have had in Sweden, and it would not have been possible if we hadn’t been in power both in Stockholm itself and in the surrounding area.

We are not in the government, the Social Democrats didn’t fancy that - but we have the deciding vote in Parliament. The political parties in Sweden divide very sharply into right-wing and left-wing - we are in between, and we say to the Social Democrats “You play along with us, or we’ll vote against your budget”. We can and do take advantage of this situation, even though we have only 5% of the votes cast. That’s where I see a big chance to give Green ideas more leverage. And I also see a need. I hope that this meeting is the start of cross-linking at a practical level, and that we can set up constant contacts between Greens in European cities via the internet.
Hallo, I’m from Brno, with 400,000 inhabitants the second largest city in the Czech Republic - nearly half a million with the people who commute in daily. I represent the Greens and have been on the council since 1994. After our success in the local elections in 2002, when the Greens notched up 5.8%, we now have four representatives of the Greens on the city council; in my urban district (ward), Nový Lískovec, our share was 24%.

Very soon after the 1989 political upheaval in Czechoslovakia the city of Brno made efforts to establish international links, starting with the city of Vienna - the mayors of both cities signed a memorandum. From 1994 on we tackled cooperation at the European level. Thanks to good leadership in the department of foreign relations we have succeeded in establishing international contacts, we have joined the Eurocities network and started to take an active part in committee meetings.

I’d like to conclude by pointing out that the EU now has an opportunity to set a good example in Brussels - not just to enunciate high-sounding principles, but to promote a mix of residential functions and office space, not just letting cars in.

A footnote on night flights. In the historical perspective this is a fairly new problem, but it is growing fast as express and courier services develop. Internationally the main operator of such flights is one particular airline, which I will refrain from naming here. Why not relocate the airport? Of course that’s quite out of the question. One approach would be to ban these night flights altogether - but then the ban should apply to the whole of Europe, otherwise the courier services will simply move elsewhere.

Thank you very much.
The Greens have a curious relationship with the cities: on one hand we are associated with rainforests and oceans, and then in favourable circumstances with sunflowers and pure water and springs and mountains, and on the other a surprisingly large proportion of the people who vote for us are city dwellers. We are city dwellers and have always been fleeing from the city - not all of us, of course. We have somehow implied that the future would be in unspoilt nature, if only nature could be saved.

There’s something that needs correcting there. The Greens need to speak out as advocates of the cities of the future, with the message that there is such a thing as urban ecology or ecological urban studies. They thereby concede that ecology is not only a matter of biology, but is also cultural politics, that it generates artificial environments. Artificial environments in which people walk about, not built from organic, living materials, but constructed spaces, which need to satisfy not just ecological criteria - by the way, how that can be done is quite a tricky issue - but also cultural ones. This conjunction of ecology and culture, of protecting the environment and producing environment, of shaping and preserving, is a principal theme of ecological urban studies; it ought to be formulated more comprehensively at some point.

In the 70’s and 80’s there was a lively debate, which we were definitely involved in, about the futu-
re of the cities. But this debate broke off abruptly in the 90’s - to some extent I see this meeting as a fresh start to the debate, an awakening from torpor. The interruption was due to several things which had previously been labelled as progress being questioned. I recall being invited to Frankfurt to take part in a debate in the 90’s, five years after I’d stopped being an alderman in Salzburg, with people I’d had discussions with earlier. We had a network linking Bologna, Barcelona, Marburg and Frankfurt with the Salzburg project. Then the wind veered round, and in the area of conflict between strategies of exploitation and ecological urban strategies the strategies of exploitation got the upper hand again. Then I was on a program in Frankfurt where someone said "We plan housing developments from greenfield site to planning permission in six weeks". In other words, no more urban development on the basis of democratic planning. We had great strategies of grassroots participation in zoning, in architecture, in the internationalization of architectural competitions. But with neoliberal strategies of urban exploitation a great deal then vanished from general awareness. I believe that all sorts of conflicts exist for which we need strategies - and networks too, by the way.

Perhaps I should add two keywords which cast a completely different light on the city: one is the issue of the overall architecture of Europe - how do we live in it - and the other the issue of globalization and nationalism, the choice between a "Europe of the regions" or a "Europe of the cities".

Actually the Europe of the regions was invented by us Greens, during a debate in the 90’s. Why have we stopped doing that? The Europe of the regions has dropped out of people’s vocabulary, including mine. And I can tell you why. Because it turns out that in Europe the region is bound up with, let us say, ancestral haunts, i.e. it has a very strong nationalistic connotation. Political right-wingers have more or less wrested the concept from us. What we meant by it was a level of democratic self-government, of participation by ordinary people. Look at the debate today - it’s plain to see that the issue is being re-nationalized in a big way. Partly as a response to the impact of globalization, in which the search for a home, for shelter, for security, for an identity begins again - and the disastrous thing is that the answers presented are reactionary, in terms of national identities. We experience it in the Convention, in the debate on the European constitution - a highly reactionary resurrection of nationalism. On the other hand the region is increasingly defined in ethnic terms.

That’s what makes it so important to present a Europe of the cities as a contrasting concept, because the city is never defined in terms of ethnic identity - on the contrary, it is the seat of openness and freedom. Cities have assessed their culture and their progress precisely by how cosmopolitan, how multicultural (in this sense of the word) they were, that democracy was invented and maintained there for hundreds and thousands of years, even in periods when democracy did not exist at government level.

There is also an internal component there, as Austria is holding a constitutional convention just now. I notice that federalism has only two levels - with Europe three: Europe, the nation state and the regions. Usually only within the executive branch. That’s particularly strong in Austria: the federal level and then the gover-
For a start - I'm not a hedgehopper between regions; I'm a townsman and don't drift into the regions - they don't do my health any good, the city is the only place where I can live. That's why I find that the issue that has been brought up today, and which Johannes has just attempted to present a theory of, is that of the city as the location of democracy. This is essential for the simple reason that we rediscover in every city the Project Europe again and again. You just can't separate Europe and the city any more today, and basically there are only European cities left. We accept that. When the Greens discuss something, the first thing you hear about is everything that Europe prevents, the measures are too neo-liberal, then people duck their heads and say "Oh God, what are we in for now" - and at the same time we're well aware that our everyday life is shaped by the process of Europeanization.

So I want to suggest three concepts for us: we need a European outlook, we must have a good look at the European rules, and we have a European responsibility.

A European outlook: it's really very interesting that, whenever we make policy, we all look around to see how what is being done where in Europe. A little earlier our colleague from Sweden said, transport policy, congestion charging, it's obvious, everyone thinks of London, how did they do it there, how didn't they do it there? Traffic calming is of course an absolutely central issue for us, and the toughest one, too, because in the question of traffic calming we always collide with another issue, namely our participatory democracy, which we are all for. Traffic calming is basically a testbed that reveals how hard it is to implement democracy. When people are asked about traffic calming, 90% are in favour - but when you table concrete proposals they're against them, unless they themselves are not affected. That is extremely difficult for Greens with the idea that it's enough to poll the citizenry for the right answers to appear. That is why traffic calming is necessary and a real challenge to
our political credo - there we can profit from all the experience, positive and negative, that has accumulated in European cities.

Another example from my time in local government in Frankfurt: we regarded it as essential to set up a network (that has unfortunately rather lost momentum recently) on the issue of drugs. You see, cities are locations of real life, and that involves the real problems. One of these is the problem of drugs. That’s where the people live who are wrecked by taking drugs, people who need help - and political responses to that vary a lot. The Dutch have set an example with a policy of decriminalizing and legalizing; we tried to help addicts with various medically justified approaches. Among the Greens we have had fierce arguments; there is a long way from our friends in Sweden to those in the Netherlands.

The key point is that we need the full breadth of the experience of European cities in order to develop our strategies. It doesn’t help when they tell us “We carried out an investigation in Stockholm with 113 people in 1968 and it turned out that legalizing soft drugs was a dramatic issue.” - We can counter with examples from other European cities where the problem looks quite different. It started with large cities such as Frankfurt, and the examples from Liverpool and the Netherlands had shown how we can protect heroin addicts even with heroin, instead of them simply wrecking themselves on the market. Of course those are complex issues, but the European outlook allows us to perceive and to profit from experience elsewhere.

Another example of the European outlook: immigration. Johannes is right, cities have always been magnets for migrants, and they always will be. That means that, since Europe is a region of immigration, the practice of integration will be tested out in the cities. Either it will function or it won’t. So all the experience we gather with immigration and with handling it is immensely important to us. Years ago when we came to power we instituted a Department of Multicultural Affairs; in other words we said the city is responsible for handling immigration, for shaping migration policy, and we derived administrative assignments from that standpoint. There have been similar developments in a variety of European cities, and I believe that the Greens play a leading part in this field, as they do with drugs and transport policy.

One final example, the most difficult one for the European outlook, is school. Why? I know formal education is devolved, I have absolutely no wish to take it away from the cities or the member states - I simply want to open your eyes to the European dimension: we have all sorts of different experiences, and while I vehemently oppose the Swedes on drugs policy, I support them just as passionately on schools. Because they set an ideal example from the European point of view. I always say to my friends in France, who are fiercely opposed to autonomy for schools, just pay a visit to Sweden - take a look at a Swedish school, what it means. In a Swedish school there are no marks at all up to the age of 14 or 15. That would be unimaginable in Germa-
I am now in the very unusual position of being supposed to argue in two separate cases. From my background I am a lawyer, and I suppose it is the task of a lawyer to argue his or her client’s case, but to argue both positions in the same case is rather unusual.

What we in English call “services of general interest” are of profound importance for the future of public services across Europe, not just in a year or two, when the debate will come to a head, but over the next twenty or thirty years, for reasons which I hope will become clear in this afternoon’s discussion. I think the best way of explaining the context is to explain very briefly...
the contents of the EU Commission's Green Paper on services of general interest, which they published in May 2003. If you go to the Commission's website, there are many responses to it from totally different directions. But one thing is sure: it is a lively debate involving profound differences of opinion across Europe.

The Commission is considering these responses and they are considering whether to turn now to a White Paper which makes firmer proposals for the future, and in particular whether to accept the request from the European Parliament that there should be a framework directive, which many of the contributions to the Green Paper have argued for.

The context for the Commission in producing its Green Paper was really (as is obvious) that the EU is at a turning point with enlargement, with a constitution (if we achieve a constitution), but also with the ongoing process with our development strategy of the so-called Lisbon agenda and the Gothenburg agenda for sustainable development, trying to bring Europe forward on the economic, social and environmental sustainability front.

In this context of changing Europe services of general interest play an increasingly important rôle; they are to be seen as part of the values shared by all European societies and form a essential element of the model of European society. The efficiency and quality of services of general interest across Europe is a factor for competitiveness and greater cohesion. The efficient and non-discriminatory provision of services of general interest is a condition for the smooth functioning of the single market. And services of general interest represent a pillar of European citizenship, providing essential rights of citizens. Only two years ago the EU's charter of fundamental rights was adopted. Within it is a provision to ensure the provision of services of general economic interest. I come back in a few minutes to this distinction between services of general interest and services of general economic interest.

I want to just read the introduction to the Green Paper, which may help. It says that

"Services of general interest are at the core of the political debate. Indeed, they touch on the central question of the role public autho-

rities play in a market economy in ensuring, on the one hand, the smooth functioning of the market in compliance with the rules of the game by all actors and, on the other hand, safeguarding the general interest, in particular the satisfaction of citizens' essential needs and the preservation of public goods, where the market fails.

In the early years of the Communities, the objective of economic integration led to concentrating efforts on the removal of barriers to trade between Member States. In particular, since the second half of the 1980s a number of sectors in which mainly, or at least also, services of general economic interest are provided, have gradually been opened up to competition. This has been the case with telecommunications, postal services, transport and energy. Liberalisation stimulated the modernisation, interconnection and integration of these sectors. It increased the number of competitors and led to price reductions, especially in those sectors and countries that liberalised earlier. Although there is as yet insufficient evidence to assess the long-term impact of the opening to competition of services of general interest, there is, based on the available information, no evidence supporting the thesis that liberalisation has had a negative impact on their overall performance, at least as far as affordability and the provision of universal service are concerned. The Community has always promoted 'controlled' liberalisation, i.e. gradual opening-up of the market accompanied by measures to protect the general interest, in particular through the concept of universal service to guarantee access to everyone, whatever the economic, social or geographical situation, to a service of a specified quality at an affordable price. In this context, it has given special attention to ensuring adequate standards for cross-border services that cannot be adequately regulated only at national level."

Despite the clarity of those words, there have been misapprehensions about the intentions of the Commission and the Union. The Commission has tried several times to clarify its position through various communications, including one to the European Council at its meeting in Laeken.

The Green Paper says correctly that the debate has in recent years evolved through the treaty of
Amsterdam of 1997. There was a specific new article specially dedicated to services of general economic interest, whose place is now recognized for the first time in the European treaties. The article 16 says that the European Community and the member states each within their respective powers have responsibility to ensure the good functioning of services of general economic interest. And when you say each within their own powers, we have to remember that the key competence of the European Commission or Union is in relation to competition.

Citizens’ uncertainties remain as to the approach adopted by the Commission. As has been indicated, the Parliament proposed a framework directive, and certainly in relation to the big network industries we have sectoral legislation at the moment and the question is whether we should get a more harmonized framework directive. The question is also if services of general interest apply not only to the network industries but potentially to health, education and social services for example. The Green paper says that the European Union respects the diversity and rôle of national, regional and local authorities and the Community will of course seek to take action only where there is genuine interest or a requirement under European Union legislation and treaty powers.

The Green Paper tries to deal with several issues:

- What should be the scope of the European Community’s action?
- If there has to be a framework directive, what are the principles that should be contained in it?
- How are we to provide for good governance in the relation of organization, regulation, financing and evaluation of services of general interest?
- Do we need new measures to increase legal certainty?

There is no definition of a service of general economic interest, let alone of a service of general interest, in the European treaties. The treaties refer only to general economic interest. But the Green Paper suggests that the following is the broadly accepted definition: “A service of general economic interest is a service of an economic nature which the member state or
public authorities, now there has been a large shift, so that in very many cases services are now being delivered through separate legal entities, either public entities or private ones, or public-private partnerships.

Through these mechanisms of having separate entities the financing of those services has become much more transparent and therefore it is much easier to see it from a competition point of view, what are the relative and respective costs of the different providers. There are of course different kinds of services of general interest. There are the large network industries which were referred to: Telecoms, post, electricity and gas, to which European law so far has been applied. But there are several other services of general economic interest to which the same principles could apply. And thirdly there are non-economic services of general interest which the European Community has no role in relation to at all. They remain entirely the national, regional or local responsibility.

One of the questions is the division between economic and non-economic services. Here, says the Commission correctly, the boundary is evolving and the distinction is tending to become blurred. And one of the questions they pose is, should there be clearer criteria and indeed what should the role (says the Green Paper) of the Community be in relation to non-economic services of general interest?

The issue about economic services is this: If they are defined as economic services, then the European law on competition and potential liberalisation applies. If they are defined as non-economic services, European law does not apply. So competition law at the European level does not apply. But more and more services are being deemed to be economic because the definitions used by the Court and the Commission are tending towards the view that where some private sector starts to develop in some parts of Europe, and with the increasing financial transparency of undertakings provided inside the local, regional or national authority, or through its separate legal entities, then those are economic aspects. And case law already demonstrates that aspects of the health service, for example, can be economic services.

So we are seeing great uncertainty where it is said that traditionally health, education and social services are non-economic services, but as markets start to evolve in those services, they are starting to become blurred as to which side of the line they fall on. And so the Commission is asking, should there be clearer criteria for defining this boundary between the economic and the non-economic? They are also asking, should there be a common community concept of services of general interest, in particular should there be some key principles that should apply to all services of general interest, and they list the following ones: “universal service, continuity of service, quality of service, affordability and consumer protection.” They propose adding two more, namely safety and security of supply. These were developed for the network industries, but the question is posed by the Commission, could they be relevant for social services? They also ask, could there be enhanced harmonization of public service obligations across Europe and should there be best practice exchange across European benchmarking exercises?

Finally, and very briefly, on financing: they emphasize once again that the forms of financing of services of general interest must not disturb the functioning of the internal market and must ensure the proper application of state rules. And on evaluation: there should be a coherent evaluation of services of general interest including not only the economic but also the environmental aspects.

There is a passage mentioning WTO and GATS. Essentially the Commission’s position is that this poses no threat to European services of general interest. The GATS recognizes the member states’ sovereign rights to regulate economic or non-economic activities in pursuance of public policy objectives, so there should not be too much to worry about.

I don’t think that my speech was exactly what Anne Houtman (Deputy Head of Cabinet of the President of the EU Commission) would have said had she been here, but I believe nearly everything I said comes directly almost word by word from the Green Paper. And I hope it gives you a context for this discussion.
I want to start with a message from the Deputy Mayorress of London, Jenny Jones, who originally was invited to be here today but unfortunately couldn’t make it. She sends her sincere apologies. She has been appointed Deputy Mayorress of London as an elected member of the Assembly by the current semi-independent mayor, Ken Livingstone. So of course she has been very important for us, not least because this is a pre-election year. Next year we will see the elections for the Greater London Assembly, the mayor of London and the European elections. We are pretty sure that the press will look closely at the European elections, I will look much more to the election of the mayor of London. We have more power than the mayor of London has, he has more influence.

I wanted to talk about the British experience. One of the things you often hear within the European Parliament, within the Commission, within the Council is the importance of the US-American model in many respects, in terms of employment, in terms of social welfare, in terms of the nature of their economy, and that the British have as in so many respects been followers of the American model, whether it’s a matter of invading other countries or of transforming our economy. The policy similarities go back quite a number of years. During the period of Conservative government, initially under Margaret Thatcher, then under John Major, we saw a huge liberalization (or privatisation as it was called in the UK) of services which should be public and of industries which had been state owned. The rationale for that was one in order to get government off people’s backs to allow the market to flourish as it could, as we heard it, in terms of meeting so many needs, and to get government out of places where it really shouldn’t be. And I think that is one of the debates, when we are looking at services of general interest, which is, as we think, very much in the public realm and which historically may have been there but actually cannot be done in other ways.

In the UK we have seen privatisation of our utilities, electricity, gas, coal industry, water. We have seen recent debates whether or not we should be moving forward to ensuring that people who don’t pay or can’t pay their utility bills, should be cut off. This was a huge scandal for a while. People who couldn’t pay their water bill were cut off. That has been changed. The debate at the moment is now, whether the electricity supply should be treated in the same way.

We have seen extensive privatisation of transport. In our group within the European Parliament, whenever we talk about privatisation of public transport, people are laughing despairingly about the British example of Rail Track, where the track was owned by one company and different rail operators ran the trains, just as they were doing in the 19th century on particular lines. We have now seen the virtual collapse of that private company which was running the track, and it has been brought back into a sort of quasi-public ownership. Outside London we have seen the total deregulation of public transport in terms of bus provision, competition on the popular routes, no
buses at all on the least popular ones, we no longer have a public airline, but I don’t think that people shed many tears about that. And we have also seen the privatization of Telecoms.

We also have seen other services of local government liberalized and a system of tendering brought in, which required local authorities by and large to accept the cheapest tender for the services required. Compulsory, competitive tendering. And this is seen as large-scale contracting out at the local authority level, whether that is of waste collection and disposal, school dinners, housing, there has been a major push to diversify local councils of direct ownership and management of social housing stock, we had a right to buy for existing tenants at highly subsidized prices. We have seen the contracting out of cleaning services, things like the assessment of management of housing benefit for many local authorities and to go with that to make sure that local authorities do their job, we also have a system of penalties for local authorities, where if they fail to perform adequately on government assessment for example in education, their role in their area can be taken over by an outside company. And that is the current state in my own borough in London. London has several local authorities within it, where education is now not the responsibility of the local council as such but of private company action.

Local authorities can only raise approximately 25% of their finances and the rest is allocated by central government. The new London authority, the GLA, raises the money from a combination of government grant and a system of precept on London’s 33 local authorities. Its only means of raising money directly is through the congestion charge, and that goes to transport. There are two main authorities in London, we have the City of London, which is the financial area, which has a Lord Mayor, and then we have London as a city, the rest of it, the Greater London Authority, which has just a mayor, who has now been directly elected, one thing that we learned from continental Europe. The mayor doesn’t have a lot of power, but he has a lot of influence.

One thing I wanted to talk about a bit in terms of the whole privatization agenda has been the effect that this had on work patterns. Because one of the other things you may be told is that basically it hasn’t been a problem: we have seen over a million jobs created in the European Union through liberalization and for people who lost their jobs in those utilities and bodies who have been absorbed elsewhere in the labour market. We have seen a market increase in temporary employment over the 1990s and onwards and in self-employment, not much in general but a lot within professions such as teaching and health professionals, and a small amount in the IT industry. The conclusion of some of the research in the UK is: the pattern is outlined where we have seen this increase in temporary work. The continuing dominance of the state in shaping the evolution of temporary work in the UK, but not only 4/5 of temporary workers were found in the public sector, but also 2/5 of all temporary employees. Part of that has been a direct result of the govern-
ment’s push to change contracting practices, to change the issues about who provides services.

Continued privatisation, a contracting out of services in the 1990s has contributed further to the growth of temporary staff, given the limited duration of contracts awarded by authorities for example and the squeeze on labour costs that competitive tendering entails, because a lot of these industries have a lot of people employed within them. They are very much people-to-people industries, and if you are looking to costs, one of the ways to do that is in wage costs, so employers look for people to fill short bursts of time, they try to cover as much as possible without having full-time staff, hoping that they will have a pool there that they can draw from as they need it. And we have seen an increase too in temporary work in the electricity, gas, water and transport sectors, all of which of course have been privatised.

Well, does this matter? - Yes, it does. It matters for the individual’s concern, it matters for the employers and it actually matters for the state. For the individuals it matters in terms of labour rights and in terms of potential earning power. The potential earning power is quite an interesting thing. There is evidence to suggest that even a very short spell of temporary employment can have a permanent effect on your earning power. Even ten years down the line after your temporary experience you could be earning between five and twelve percent less than you would otherwise have been doing for men. Women are down by nine percent, but they are down in most cases anyway.

Training is also an issue, for employees and employers. Firms using temporary workers are buying skills, not creating them. So there are issues about who does the training, who pays for it? And I think that is one of the reasons why there is such a huge interest at the moment in the European Union in training getting people into work, getting people off social benefits and back into the workplace. And you can also see costs to those employers in the longer term, in terms of turnover within their enterprises, in terms of morale, and potential skills shortages, which at the health service is running at huge levels in the UK at the moment. London has a 35% turnover in jobs in the national health service every year and 45,000 jobs are vacant at the moment.

And if you are looking at the longer term, how are services and security systems going to cope with this increase of temporary working pushed by the liberalization agenda? And how are we going to pay for the pensions we are all panicking about in future, if we are putting more and more people into temporary work, cutting their earning potential etc.? - But never mind, temporary work is a good thing, labour market flexibility is an extremely good thing, and we know this, because my government says so, the Commission says so and the Council of Ministers says so. And of course we believe everything they tell us.

So as I say, when we are told that liberalization has created a million jobs in the European Union, we have to ask a lot of questions about the quality of those jobs and the longer term impact, so the issue is just flexibility and the terms and conditions under which it is done, which is what we have been saying about the whole services of general interest agenda.

The whole question about GATS and the WTO, this is something on which our political group has done a lot of work on. In many respects we are the opposition in the European Parliament, as to how this process is going on at the moment. Our particular concern is not only what effect it will have on the world's poorer countries, but also what does it do in terms of the rights of local authorities. And national governments do continue to make decisions about who provides these very valuable services that all our citizens depend on and that we see as a matter of right and a hallmark of a civilized society.

There are some issues there, but I think the key message that I would bring from the UK is, if we are going down this path, please examine very carefully what is happening in the UK and what has been happening in the US, just so that we know exactly what we are getting ourselves into when we decide to open up services. And it may be that the evidence persuades us that actually that isn’t what we want to do. We want to keep control at a level where citizens can understand the decisions that are being made.

Thank you.
Albert Steinhauser  
Party spokesperson of Die Grünen Vienna:

In Vienna partial liberalization has a party political flavour throughout and is crisscrossed by personal friendships. The Viennese model looks like this: numerous functions are outsourced to organizations with close links to a political party (in Vienna the Social Democrats) - with the result that jobs are handed to people for party political reasons, the political organs lose control of the area in question, and the inner workings stay invisible. This to the Viennese model.

I think, though, that in the debate about the provision of essential services we need to look at the essence of such provision and the historical reasons for its playing such an important rôle. The aim was to supply the population with key services of high quality at affordable prices. This comprehensive provision has very often been underwritten by ambitions involving social policy, the distribution of incomes, ecology and gender policy. The principle of solidarity has always played a central part, too; for instance in the health service people on higher incomes have contributed toward the cost of services for people on lower incomes, or in public transport busy routes have subsidized less busy routes. It is fair to say that the political will existed to apply parameters other than business efficiency, profit orientation and the law of supply and demand to the provision of essential services.

We now find that the whole framework is undergoing a metamorphosis. I’d call it a shift in values, determined more than anything else by today’s neo-liberal thinking. The discussion has a very strong ideological slant. First there is the debate about redefining the function of the State. Second, there are the budget restrictions which governments have imposed on themselves. Third, large companies - who naturally want to open up the market in services - are consistently lobbying for that. However - and let there be no mistake about this - the public-sector providers of services have in many cases made things easy for their critics by avoiding openness and any discussion of aims; instead, the slogan "Public = good and successful" was presented, without any attempt to show why essential services are provided and with what aim.

Any public body that provides essential services, but dodges this discussion, will soon find itself on the defensive. The framework is changing - there is the European Commission’s Green Book and there are the GATS negotiations within the World Trade Organization, representing the process of liberalizing trade in services, which is bound to have an impact on the provision of essential services at community level, since they fall within the service sector - and no one can guarantee that the GATS process of negotiation will not lead to at any rate some essential services being liberalized.

I believe that in many cases cities and communities are unaware of this; so an important task for the international Green movement would be to implant resistance to this project in city councils and communities. Our experience suggests that the discussion there
is mostly not predetermined by ideology; while conservative and bourgeoise groups push hard for liberalization at national and supranational level, they - on the local level - are quite capable of accepting the doubts expressed by progressive groups in opposition. There are a number of communities with conservative majorities that have made public statements highly critical of the GATS process, I think it is well worth carrying the discussion to the communities, pointing out there how explosive the situation is, and working toward a broad alliance of firm resistance.

At any rate the impression is there that applying the usual rules of competition to and opening the market in the provision of essential services would completely alter the role of the State and the communities. It has also been mentioned that we could expect a switch from responsibility for delivering essential services to responsibility for ensuring them. The performance parameters in the provision of essential services will shift drastically. Of course there are aspects where the political aim should be taken into account, but if there is to be competition, business efficiency will be a central criterion, and we shall find ourselves gradually drifting into a situation in which political aims are assessed for business efficiency, too.

We are aware that the way in which essential services are provided has very little to do with participative democracy, but I believe it ought to be a Green aim to implement ways for people to participate in the provision of essential services. It may be hard to imagine any such thing - but in many cases it will be even harder to argue people a say where private organizations are the providers, because of course a private provider will claim the right to take his decisions without outside interference.

One last point: if competition is allowed, the question arises whether public providers of services are at all possible. If a public provider competes, he will normally have to behave like a private provider. There are examples here too: RWE in Germany was once a communal organization, but behaves as a trans-national company these days. So the question is whether there are still any public providers that act as such and not as private providers.

Of course there are models aimed at some sort of compromise. A model of this kind that is being discussed among the Greens is that of regulated competition. This model has the merit of aiming at preserving the scope of political structuring. It assumes that (local) government defines aims and quality standards - quite possibly with ordinary citizens having a say in this - and then private providers submit tenders, with the contract being awarded to the one who satisfies the quality criteria with the greatest efficiency. Here I feel we are misled by theoretical notions somewhat. To do things that way one would have to have defined the quality criteria in all details by the time that the contract was awarded, which can be very difficult, and then inspection would involve a great deal of expense, since conformity to the quality criteria can be guaranteed only by means of inspection. That is really a headache, and it will ultimately mean that the savings hoped for by advocates of the model appear as expenditure on inspection. Then again, the model ignores the fact that quality standards are subject to a process of negotiation; there is no reason to suppose that communities will be able to dictate conditions to powerful companies in the market. Given that negotiations are involved, there is no real guarantee that quality standards can be enforced.
Gianluca Borghi
Member of the Regional Government of Emilia Romagna (Italy):

I represent the Greens in the government of Emilia Romagna; it is a centre-left government, as in ten of the Italian regions in all, while the other ten have governments which we would not describe as centre-right but simply as right-wing.

Partly because of infringement proceedings at EU level in connection with public services in our various countries, laws have been passed in Italy aimed at communal enterprises providing public services; here I specially have in mind the public services concerned with supplying energy, drinking water, electricity and waste disposal. Italy addressed this issue three years ago, exclusively at the regional level. That was after the reform of the Italian constitution passed by Parliament, in which the allocation of levels of responsibility was cleared up and various issues that remain the responsibility of the state were delegated to the regions.

These do have legislative powers, and our region recently passed a law on the administration of public services which includes a definition of them, and which has already led to corresponding changes. In the major cities of our region new enterprises have already taken shape in the form of holding companies that result from mergers between the earlier public enterprises and that achieve turnovers in the billions. Now obviously the Greens laid down as a priority keeping a majority share of the capital in such companies in public ownership. Shares in this holding company were being traded on the stock exchange - that is the case in Bologna, too; in Emilia Romagna the enterprise concerned is Ovest. This tie to a majority shareholding in public ownership is a sinea qua non, for reasons which I needn’t discuss here, since they are quite clear - and a central plank in our policy. None of the parties in the centre-left coalition, made up of the left-wing democrats, the two Communist parties and the Margherita Party, have questioned this. These strategic resources are a new dimension, in character basically public-sector-oriented, but involved in a much larger market than the one that the earlier public enterprises used to be active in.

Apart from the ownership issue, there were other conditions we also insisted on: for instance that the reserves of water and energy (in particular) must be safeguarded vis-à-vis these markets, as must waste disposal - via an integrative approach that of course must also ensure that local government is represented on the boards of these holding companies, and that not just a product, but also the associated services are sold, i.e. all the activities needed to actually get the water into our dwellings. In other words, the equation “Free market equals more consumption equals more welfare” is subordinated to the principle of ecological sustainability, and thus to husbanding resources.

The industrial plans for these public services take both ecological aspects and global issues such as climate, husbanding resources and safeguarding human rights. We have demanded that the administration of public services must not impede the difficult learning process involved in decentralized management; here I’m thinking particularly of domestic waste disposal, but also of renewable sources of energy, of cogeneration, where we need to reach the right solutions within the logic of industry.
I'd like to mention another aspect already touched on by a speaker from Britain, namely the global perspective. We are engaged, not only in Italy but throughout Europe, in setting up mixed public/private enterprises capable of acting in the global context; of course they are obliged to comply with the WTO rules and the GATS directives, thus they are participants in the process of liberalization, particularly in Southern and Eastern countries, where they may perhaps behave in a different way - possibly one and the same enterprise from Emilia Romagna may carry out projects in the Sahara, in Palestine, maybe in Bosnia, far away, on the scale envisaged by the World Bank. For instance, we spoke about water resources, about managing water democratically in small-scale, decentralized projects; that's what is involved here. Via WTO and GATS our enterprises may end up doing the opposite of what we want, once they are acting outside their home countries.

To finish off with, I was much impressed by Jeremy Smith's remarks about the market, about the political initiative in which education, health and so on are not just sectors to make profits in; I regard that as a discussion we must conduct in future - not only in my country, where the issue is what resources must be invested to keep the health sector going, or the social services, which are of course supported by the NGOs with their social networks. The issue comes up in the Agenda 21, too, and we are well aware that this is a critical issue for the vision of the future in the EU member states. Is one to adopt a universal perspective, in which the community shoulders the risk of illness and injury, or should the individual citizen insure himself or herself against these risks privately, as is the practice in the USA? That is naturally a major issue, and of course the Greens must take a clear stand in the debate.

Yesterday someone in the audience asked John Gormley whether corruption really exists in Ireland on a scale comparable with Italy. I'm delighted to assure you that in Italy corruption is a thing of the past: all the laws are kept, all building regulations are complied with, everyone pays their taxes, and amnesties are declared for anyone who should fail to. Everything is taken care of in the case of those with Swiss bank accounts, too - a law was recently passed to cover that. (Just a little joke to finish off with!).
the cultural impulses that the cities in Europe have provided, but about the Europe of the regions. Now, the so-called Committee of the Regions does exist in Europe, and I recommend everyone here to read and absorb its resolutions and decisions; you will see that they are a bit short on content.

When the regions meet together to influence Europe, the conflicts of interest between the various regions, and the differences in their constitutional status, water down the content of the results considerably. During the Convention the Committee presented its point of view most forcefully; as some of you know, one of the groups organized in the Committee of the Regions is the European League of Cities. However, the League has very limited opportunities to express its standpoint in the Committee, even though it is the problems of the cities that will have a decisive influence on the future of Europe.

Now, as some of you will know from practical experience, there is a contrast between the interests of the regions, i.e. the provinces and so on, and those of the cities within them. I have experienced that personally: the most ferocious and controversial meeting I have ever taken part in was one between the City of Innsbruck and the surrounding Region. It was really brutal. I see it as a key challenge for us Greens not only to link the cities up with each other, but also - as is starting to happen in some countries - to form links between the Green politicians in the cities and in the surrounding communities. I’ll tell you one thing - the other parties cannot do that. Neither the Social Democrats nor the Conservatives are capable of genuinely reconciling these divergent interests, because they haven’t acquired the ability to think in complex systems from the cradle on.

I believe we have two networking tasks in future: we need links between the cities, and we need links between each city and its environs. We have to take part in this wretched discussion about the regions as it is currently going on. The reason is straightforward: by way of the Committee of the Regions provinces, regions and counties are trying to create a new nationalism, which can only have fatal consequences for us, and also for the European cities. I have always said that, at the end of the day, the Committee of the Regions can perfectly well be scrapped on the grounds of ineffectiveness. What we do need, though, is a network of links between the cities, and I’m confident that we Greens can be the first make this network come alive - not just ritual get-togethers with handshakes all round and a glass of wine in the evening, oh no - Working together and exchanging concrete ideas.

I don’t think it was an accident that the workshop on transport in cities had such a large attendance. The problems the cities have with transport are a major challenge in both ecological and social respects. The illusion of mobility and the value of mobility represent a huge challenge there. I regard the components of a solution that have been mentioned today, such as congestion charging and car-free housing developments, as extremely important, and we Greens must follow such ideas up and define solutions in a specific area - which leads me to the next question, namely where does the money from a congestion charge go? That’s the key issue, since, if the idea favoured in Austria is implemented and the money from tolls just goes to finance new roads, we are no closer to a solution - the problems that are now stretching our resources to the limit will simply have been augmented.

The first assignment I took on for the Greens, at the end of the 1980’s, was linking the transport initiatives in the Alpine region together. The second half of the 80’s was when the problems with road traffic in the Alpine region became visible, because the numbers of trucks increased so much, and it was grassroots initiatives and Greens who drew attention to these problems right from the start. My job was to introduce all the various small-scale initiatives in the Alpine region to one another and facilitate the exchange of experience. It was a very exciting and rewarding assignment, which we organized in several steps. The first point was of course exchanging experience of the actual problem, exchanging data and information, which could also be used as precedents in other places, along the lines of "Look here, the Province of Tyrol has a network of measuring facilities - why haven’t we got one?" or "The Province of Salzburg has invested public money in car-free projects - why isn’t that happening here?". This exchange of data and informa-
I want to begin by telling you a little bit of Green party history in the US and close with networking between Green officeholders and between Green parties on the global Green website and how we can share news and information among ourselves and with people around the world.

The Greens in the United States of America were founded in the fall of 1984, in Minnesota, the state where I grew up, and we were inspired very much by your success. The German Greens' success in the 1983 election with 27 seats in the Bundestag made us believe that our kind of philosophy was possible in an industrialized country. In the mid 1980s we were in the middle of the Ronald Reagan era, the most scary time until now under George Bush II. We were inspired by what happened in Europe, and when we had our launch meeting we started with what we call ten key values. We started with the German Greens' four pillars - ecology, social justice, grassroots democracy, non-violence - and we added six more. We started building local groups, based on the ten key values. This...
was a good thing because it helped us to transform society, but it was a difficult thing at the same time, because we attracted people who were not convinced that there should be a Green party, especially with our US electoral system, like the British first past the post.

From 1985 to 1989 we focused on building local groups. And by 1989 we had 300 local groups throughout the country. We had a couple of national gatherings and we started to develop a national program in 1989, which we passed in 1990. The philosophical debates of that time - one was party versus movement, one which you have all gone through, the other one was social ecology versus deep ecology, which we thought was the biggest debate in the world and which divided us for a long time. In 1990 we started forming state parties, but most of them in the west: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, New Mexico. These were the first five parties who qualified for the ballot. And there are different ballot qualification rules in every state. Our growth has been very different in different places. While we started growing well in the western states, people in the east were still stuck in the party versus movement dilemma.

In 1995 we looked ahead to the 1996 election; we had not yet put up a presidential candidate but we were looking forward to having our first ever national convention. It was held at the University of California in Los Angeles. We wanted to be prepared for the presidential election, with the unlikely idea that there may be somebody whom we can support. In 1995 we learned that Ralph Nader might possibly be interested. Two other Greens and I sat down and did some negotiating. Nader’s position was that he didn’t want to come forward, he wanted to respond to a social movement to call for a candidacy. We in California worked out a path where we produced a letter from 50 social movement leaders, some Greens, some from labour, some from the peace movement and some others, to say “Ralph, we are interested in you running!”.

The letter came to Ralph, he responded, he decided to run and the first campaign took place in 1996. But Ralph didn’t run a serious campaign; he felt that the movement had to lead, not the candidate. He had been a movement person for so long, it was hard for him to change his mind and see himself as a candidate. He always wanted to build from the grassroots instead. He didn’t campaign that hard, but what he did for us is that the campaign changed us Greens, because it started to attract locally oriented people who were very credible, who were very successful in their own communities, into the Green Party. This changed the balance of power internally, and after the 1996 elections we started a new organization called the Association of State Green Parties linking those individual state parties.

In 2000 Ralph ran a second time; this time we got nearly 3 million votes and we ran the campaign in over 40 states. We followed that in 2001 by changing our name to the Green Party of the United States; we fought with the federal government for recognition for national committee status, we did this at a press conference in Santa Monica.

At that point we made a major shift from networking local groups to networking of state parties to a national party that started raising money, that started hiring staff; our current national budget for next year is 800,000 dollars. Our electoral strategy is what we are focused on: how do we succeed in the American system which is so undemocratic, because it combines the British system of first past the post with corporate financing. So it is very difficult along with the corporate media that will not show alternative views, apart from saying how the Greens will hurt the Democrats. Therefore we have to focus on the municipal, local level, where we can campaign from door to door, where people who have a reputation in their community can succeed.
What I need from your country is one person who will be willing on the national level to post news from your country. Another thing that is on this site here is video and audio, we have also a page specifically for streaming video and audio. Any item, for example the video we do right here, we start digitalizing and making it into quick time or real audio player files. You can upload these files yourself to any homepage at home and put the link on this page. This will give us a global video and audio homepage.

Here is a button where you can submit news. Our website has links to news, party history, to streaming video. It is not yet a dynamic page. It is static, but over the next few months a proposal will be submitted to the steering committee to make it an active global page, so that there will be a place for all of us to go and see web-updated news world-wide. To fund that we need the person who is doing the web work. We create a web page with a facility for donating by credit card. The global website also has global statements from various meetings, etc.

Thank you very much.
GREENING THE CITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
2nd European Meeting of Green Local Councillors, Vienna, December 2003

REPORTS FROM WORKSHOPS

Sunday, December 7th, 2003

On Saturday, 9 workshops and one round table took place. We can only reproduce abbreviated versions of the reports here, but you can get further information from the contact persons and/or from our website http://wien.gruene.at/conference03

1) Cultural policy (Marie Ringler)

We started with the question what is art, it is really difficult to explain what art is, then we discussed what politicians have to do with art, and we came out that the most that politics and politicians can do is not to interfere in it, just to give money. Then we came out with a question, should we support and pay for culture or should we leave it to the market. We came to the conclusion that many groups are expressing themselves through culture. That means that small groups and minorities have to be supported, so that they can express themselves through art.

There are a lot of questions open to us, such as how do you define the distinction between art and culture. What we found most useful for us is to form a working group that deals with these questions, and discusses issues of European culture policy.

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2) Environment and traffic (Rüdiger Maresch)

We decided to discuss two of the four topics, environment and waste management. We also discussed the Trans-European Networks and how the Commission’s projects will affect the municipalities. It was interesting to get an example from Michael Cramer who told us that from Berlin to Tallinn there is a distance of 1,700 km, and it took him 60 hours and he had to change trains nine times. In 1935 the same journey took just 27 hours. But the more borders you have to cross the more difficult traveling gets.

We were discussing the congestion charges in Stockholm. Public transport with underground and buses has to be improved, but this is not enough. We need a toll system that will earn us one billion Swedish Crowns per year. This money is going to finance public transport. The system is going to be introduced at the beginning of 2005. Elections are due in 2006, and then the citizens will be able to vote whether they want to keep the system or get rid of it.

The second topic was waste management. The most important issue is to avoid getting so much waste. The mistakes that have been made in Western and Central Europe in the last twenty years should not be repeated in the new accession countries. We have to avoid accumulating so much waste. We talked about waste tourism - waste being sent around Europe, like just now from Naples to a town in Styria here in Austria. We believe the Greens should not make the mistake of getting involved in this tourism (motto: it’s better to incinerate waste here than in a bad plant in Eastern Europe). It must be central to avoid waste, then it will be possible to phase out incineration. The increasing amount of waste in the new EU member countries is of course a big problem, and transporting the waste to other countries is a very short-sighted solution.

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3) Employment policy and equal opportunities (Monika Vana)

In our workshop there were people from 10 countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Austria). We exchanged ideas for local projects. Our common concerns are increasing unemployment, increasing poverty, increasing social marginalisation of women, and atypical, uncertain labour conditions, which are very often a trap for women, because they use to have lower incomes and indeed the income gap between men and women is growing in so many countries. Problems are the EURO stability pact, budgetary restrictions, neo-liberalism, deregulation and privatization. This has an impact on the towns and the European Union is rather sceptical about labour market policy, policy with women, which should be done on the local level. We worked out the following position paper: "The new liberal policy of the European Union (competition pressure, deregulation, liberalization, stability pact etc.) resulted in an increasingly unequal distribution in the social welfare in the last ten years. An additional effect was not only the increasing number of unemployed but also a dramatic increase in the number of persons threatened by poverty and persons living already in poverty. The main burden of this development has to be carried by the cities. The second European meeting of Green local councillors is supporting the achievement of the following goals in the future: Increasing the importance of the cities and communities in the European Union, guaranteeing the capacity of the cities to act by the European Union (in structural and financial respects), a stronger network building between the cities and increasing the extent of cross-border cooperation, guaranteeing the various public services on the local level: Stop GATS, a social European Union, full employment and social security protection for the non-typical employment relations (part-time work, tele-working, quasi freelancing, an active gender equality policy towards women on all political levels, restructuring of the EU structural funds (more funds for labour market policy, social policy and women), European financial transfer, a Europe-wide initiative to reduce working time, transfer between paid and unpaid work."

Another important point is to increase women’s representation within the Greens. The Viennese Greens in organizing this conference wanted to make sure that all the workshops, panels and delegations should be created on a parity level with 50% women there. Unfortunately we didn’t manage that, although 40% of women were invited, mostly from Eastern European countries. In Vienna, in the Viennese Green Women Organization we started a women’s project which is called FiF, women in functions, which tries to implement gender mainstreaming so that women’s participation grows. We have a 50% quota of women, but this is not enough to fill a lot of the top posts.

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4) Greens in urban districts (Gerhard Jordan, Hugo van Valkenburg)

Gerhard Jordan: There were 16 participants in this workshop, also from enlargement countries like the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia. We were able to make a comparison between different districts from Brno, Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, from Ljubljana and from Wroclaw in Poland. In Berlin and Amsterdam comparatively speaking the budget is quite high and they have a relative amount of flexibility. These districts are almost little towns as far as power is concerned. In Vienna, Ljubljana and Wroclaw I the situation is rather different: The districts cannot decide much at all and do not have sufficient financial resources. In fact all the Viennese districts together have only 2% of the total city budget. In Ljubljana you can decide on things like playgrounds for example and not much more. So with comparing powers we then looked about Green work and possibilities for influencing things there, and there were a lot of interesting activities that you can learn about from different countries. We found out, that in the Pankow district in Berlin the citizens not only are allowed to take part in the council meetings as visitors but are also allowed to put their positions there - which is not possible, but would be very desirable elsewhere, here in Vienna for example. We will try to collect the addresses and different experiences from those districts which were not here this time - Paris, Budapest,
improving the quality of the housing by providing common rooms, workshops, saunas etc. The inhabitants of the housing estate abstain from possessing their own car. They may use car sharing instead. The other project is a housing estate with "green energy", where several hundred people can live, not again too far from here. This basically must be the way how we have to build in the future. Architects in our workshops said that if people don’t have to pay much for their energy, because the house blocks are built according to the passive energy principle, then things would be much better, not at least socially. Town planners in our workshop also explained the problem of urban sprawl: Often the centers of the towns get devoid of the population, whereas outside settlements are exploding with all the social and transport consequences. We also spoke about the different ownership of land in our different countries. Any kind of future meeting of Green local politicians should look at the issues of settlements and urban policy. I think that might be a key to sustainability in the future. Gabriele Bagnasco, he is a mayor of Vercelli, a town in Northern Italy where they grow rice, presented a project. Apparently there is quite a lot of free area around the town, and the idea was to create a green belt around the town, but without having to shift the rice fields. In the afternoon we had two inputs. Christoph Erdmenger from the ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) created a campaign named "Procura +" which is going to start next year with a lot of networking going on, looking at tendering from washing powder to buses, and how public tendering, public purchasing can be done. Martin Weißhäupl of the Vien­ nese Greens meant that we should aim at durable food for schools, Kindergartens, and try to convert to organic food. As this started working in Vienna, it became very popular. Just to show that towns and municipalities as far as procurement is concerned, can make substantial steps in the direction of sustainable economics.

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5) Applied environmental technologies, sustainable planning policy and sustainable procurement (Christoph Chorherr)

At the beginning we looked to a couple of projects we are rather proud to present and discuss. One of these is a car free area, not far from here. It is a housing estate with less parking spaces than usual, thus saving about one million Euros that were used for improving the quality of the housing by providing common rooms, workshops, saunas etc. The inhabitants of the housing estate abstain from possessing their own car. They may use car sharing instead. The other project is a housing estate with "green energy", where several hundred people can live, not again too far from here. This basically must be the way how we have to build in the future. Architects in our workshops said that if people don’t have to pay much for their energy, because the house blocks are built according to the passive energy principle, then things would be much better, not at least socially. Town planners in our workshop also explained the problem of urban sprawl: Often the centers of the towns get devoid of the population, whereas outside settlements are exploding with all the social and transport consequences. We also spoke about the different ownership of land in our different countries. Any kind of future meeting of Green local politicians should look at the issues of settlements and urban policy. I think that might be a key to sustainability in the future. Gabriele Bagnasco, he is a mayor of Vercelli, a town in Northern Italy where they grow rice, presented a project. Apparently there is quite a lot of free area around the town, and the idea was to create a green belt around the town, but without having to shift the rice fields. In the afternoon we had two inputs. Christoph Erdmenger from the ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) created a campaign named "Procura +" which is going to start next year with a lot of networking going on, looking at tendering from washing powder to buses, and how public tendering, public purchasing can be done. Martin Weißhäupl of the Vien­ nese Greens meant that we should aim at durable food for schools, Kindergartens, and try to convert to organic food. As this started working in Vienna, it became very popular. Just to show that towns and municipalities as far as procurement is concerned, can make substantial steps in the direction of sustainable economics.

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5) Applied environmental technologies, sustainable planning policy and sustainable procurement (Christoph Chorherr)
6) Local Democracy (Jean-Pierre Muret)

A large number of countries were represented in our workshop. We did run into certain difficulties because we struggled to translate particular words and concepts for which other definitions apply in other languages. After a time communication did function, more or less, and we simply used various different languages.

One initial thought really tickled us. Local democracy doesn’t necessarily mean representative democracy. Etymologically speaking that’s direct democracy. When the Greens use the word democracy that goes without saying. Our concept of democracy is more direct and more rapid, without intervening levels. Democracy can be constructed if people want to and if they get on with it. And then the second thing: when we talk about parliamentary democracy, representative democracy or direct democracy, we should not forget that the delegates are elected. In Green institutions elections are often very tricky. And the parties, particularly in Southern Europe, use up a lot of energy on internal debates about who is called what, which wears our internal democracy out - while we are not sufficiently visible in the political arena. Direct democracy, which relativizes electoral functions, could help towards using our energies in a different way. We have the European principle of subsidiarity, and democracy is implemented in various ways, depending on the subject matter or the actions of democracy. It would be a mistake to cut it back or centralize it, since democratic principles automatically imply that powers are exercised close to ordinary people and to those actually involved, and subsidiarity must also be a central theme in our debate about democracy. Our concern is collecting the Greens’ experience, at the European level and in individual countries. To ensure an exchange of ideas, we must start by using the vehicles that are on hand. Here I’m thinking of the people who have helped to organize this event in Vienna, but also of the European Parliament with its translation facilities for documents and e-Mails. Another point: In the individual countries there could also be Green associations to bring the various delegates together, to work on the budget, on town planning, on transport facilities, say; it would be really good for Europe if a blueprint for this were agreed between the responsible agents in these associations after the congress in Rome next year. We could set up horizontal groups - after all, Green culture involves building a variety of relationships, not just top-down but also horizontal. This differs somewhat from the idea liberals (in particular) have of free trade; we need a free exchange of views and thoughts for our culture and our common welfare.

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7) Migration and illegality.
A challenge for European cities (Willem van Gent)

In the workshop we had two speakers from Amsterdam and Vienna, and there were also reports from Norway, Sweden, Turkey, Malta and Greece. Maria Vassilakou gave an explanation of the situation in Vienna, and Herman Meijer told about the Dutch practices. In the afternoon session team members of the soccer- and social club “FC Sans Papier” told us about their living. Reasons for illegal residence slightly differ from one country to another. But the main reasons are asylum seekers who get no status but stay in the country; people who cross the border to work illegally; and ambulant criminals who travel anywhere they can do their “business”. The main categories of jobs they’re doing are construction, cleaning houses, hotels and restaurant kitchens, taking care for children and elderly, harvesting, prostitution and criminal activities. The way the illegally staying people are treated by the authorities when they are caught varies from country to country. In Austria for example they are imprisoned and expelled. In The Netherlands this happens only to those who committed crimes. Illegal workers are often exploited by people who provide jobs, and it’s no coincidence that this exploitation often is done by fellow countrymen. Then we discussed the political actions that are needed: On the national and EU level the immigration should be coordinated. In the current situation every single country is trying to create the worst possible situation for the immigrants to force them to
go elsewhere. This rat race can be stopped by coordination on the European level. On city level measures have to be taken, too. City authorities cannot change the national law, but can do the following: No asking for papers in basic public services like healthcare and schools; health insurance for everyone; and providing information about where you can get food or a bed for the night. The "sans papiers" that visited the workshop in the afternoon session also mentioned the right to vote and job opportunities. But first of all they like to be treated as human beings, they don’t like to be humiliated and harassed by the police all the time. The challenge for the Greens in the cities is to provide those people opportunities for a life without constant fear. The problems of illegals should be recognized as they are human beings.

We decided to launch a network with people from every member state, one to five persons and prepare a workshop on free software in public administration for the Rome Congress in February 2004. We are working in conjunction with the Greens in Italy on proposal for European directive on free software in public administration. We have a mailing list and we try to set up a website so that we can exchange plans but also provide access to the public.

8) Communities and free software (Laurence Vandewalle)

In this workshop which has been attended by participants from 7 countries, we discussed free software for public administration. We are convinced that free software for the public authorities is important, certainly for the Greens, it depends how we see the world, and you can see the importance on the work done on software patenting in the European Parliament. We prepared a text with the following demands:

"We demand that governments on all levels promote the introduction and use of free and open source software within their governmental bodies and public administrations as a starting point to enforce open standards and take all necessary measures to prevent the creation of monopolies. We want our governments to make use of free and open source software to promote the equitable participation to e-government services and public information to citizens regardless of their gender, ethnic origin and socially disadvantaged groups in order to ensure their active participation and exchange information and knowledge. We encourage governments to adapt their public procurement procedures to ensure fair competition between open source and proprietary software and promote the use of free and open software in particular within the educational system and towards end users. We demand that governments and the European Union to ensure that source code of software developed and financed through public funds be distributed under Free and Open Source Licences, unless there are valid reasons to the contrary."

We are also planning a statement on ecology of the information society for the Rome Congress. The Austrian Greens have a project to produce a give-away CD "test your linux": it is a test version of Linux (does not install, but you can test Linux by booting directly from the CD ROM - it includes an open office version and internet functionality - and we can add any kind of content we would like). The project will be in German but could be adapted to other languages. So we invite you all to get in touch with us.

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9) Participatory Democracy - the city belongs to us (Rainer Tomassovits)

In recent years politics is characterized among other things by the fact that more and more decisions are made "at the top" by a small group of people far away from the population. The aim of this workshop was to analyze these developments and discuss possible alternatives. In the first part of the workshop a project was presented, which was accomplished in the last one and a half years in Vienna and which could be such a possible alternative. The topic of this project is local
Green local politics and Europe

GREENING EUROPEAN CITIES

Resolution, tabled by Monika Vana (Die Grünen, Vienna) and adopted on the 4th EFGP Congress in Rome on February 22nd, 2004

Europe is facing an unprecedented increase in unequal distribution of social welfare in the last ten years. Effects of neoliberalism are the rise of unemployment and a dramatic increase in the number of persons threatened by or already living in poverty. In addition this has resulted in a loss of quality of life and environmental degradation.

The main burden of this development has to be carried by the cities. 80% of the EU-population live in cities and urban areas. Urban politics are more and more linked to decisions on the European level.

Recognizing the growing importance of cities in the European Union the European Greens support the achievement of the following goals in the future:

- A stronger network building between the cities and an increase in the number of cross border co-operation projects, especially with the new member states and the accession countries.
- Financial and structural power of cities in order to provide good services for people.
- Guaranteeing equal access to the various services for the public. No deregulation of public services; public control and transparency of companies that serve public needs. STOP GATS!
- A social European Union, working towards full employment and social security for atypical employment.
- An active gender equality policy towards women on all political levels and in public services.
- Shorter working time and a fair distribution of working time.
- Urban democracy: "City-citizenship" (voting right on the city level for non-EU citizens), right to vote for young people from 16 years on, proportional electoral systems, local referenda on district level, participatory budgets, more direct participation of citizens.
- Use of open source and free software by city administrations.
- Establish cultural policy that emphasises contemporary art.

Further information and contact:
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On June 21st, 1996, the Viennese Greens organized a meeting of green councillors from cities and municipalities from all over Europe in Vienna’s Town Hall. The 1st Congress of the European Federation of Green Parties (EFGP) that took place from June 21st - 23rd in the Austria Center Vienna, enabled nearly 200 Greens from 20 countries to participate in the local councillors meeting scheduled just before the opening session.

Peter Pilz, then city councillor in Vienna and now MP, outlined the perspectives of city foreign policy facing the Maastricht criteria. Leo-luca Orlando, then mayor of Palermo and member of the Green Group in the European Parliament, spoke about his efforts and his struggle against the Sicilian mafia.

Four workshops were held, with the following topics:
- The rôle of the cities in Europe - city policies beyond national states
- Maastricht and the budget crises - how do cities deal with it?
- Green councillors in small towns and rural areas
- A green network of European cities

The European Greens will take efforts to improve the networking of their local groups and councillors in order to achieve those goals.

The Viennese Greens presented some of the projects they supported, among them the car-free housing estate in the 21st district. Meanwhile, it has been realized and received a lot of attention far beyond the Austrian border.

The closing speech was held by Pekka Sauri, member of the city government in Helsinki. He told us about the achievements of the Greens who constantly score about 20% of the vote in Finland’s capital.

Gerhard Jordan, Greens of Vienna, organizer of the 1996 meeting

The Austrian Green Foundation (Grüne Bildungswerkstatt) has produced a documentation booklet on this meeting. Copies can be ordered by e-mailing to gerhard.jordan@gruene.at
## 1st European Meeting of Green Local Councillors, Vienna, June 21st, 1996.

From left to right: Gerhard Fritz (Innsbruck), Gerhard Jordan (Vienna), Albert Statz (Berlin), Mark Mulloney (UK) and Pekka Sauri (Helsinki, standing).

## 2nd European Meeting of Green Local Councillors, Vienna, December 5th - 7th, 2003

### List of Participants

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* * *

**CC** = city councillor

**DC** = district councillor

**DM** = deputy mayor

**EFGP** = European Federation of Green Parties

**GG** = Green Group

**GEP** = Green Group in the European Parliament

**LC** = local councillor

**MCG** = member of city government

**MEP** = Member of European Parliament

**MP** = Member of Parliament

**PM** = party member

**RC** = regional councillor
GREENING THE CITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
2nd European Meeting of Green Local Councillors, Vienna, December 2003

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2nd European Meeting of Green Local Councillors, Vienna, December 2003

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