

Vihreät The Greens

Parliamentary elections 2007

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Green is for courage, responsibility and justice

Green policies are about **courage**. They offer solutions to the biggest problems of our time: climate change, increasing inequality and an unpredictable working life.

Green policies are about **responsibility**. They span over election years and state borders. The decisions we make must be decisions that we can share with our grandchildren with pride.

Green policies are about **justice**. They combine protecting our society's weak, conserving nature and respecting diversity. We advance the interests of those who cannot get their voice heard: the future generations, the nature, the poor of our country and the world. The equilibrium between nature and man also guarantees a secure future.

Quality of Life from Services, Education and Culture

Every human being is valuable. Civilized society respects diversity and especially looks after the weak. Everybody has a right to a living guaranteeing humane life. The fairness of our welfare state is shown in everyday life as good public services. Education and culture belong to everyone.

Fruits of growth belong to everyone

A part of the population is doing economically better than ever. However, the fruits of economic growth are not available to everyone. Those depending on social security for their living are faring especially poorly.

The government of Finland has used most of its economical leeway for giving tax cuts for people with high incomes, and has not been able to afford income transfers. The number of poor people in Finland has doubled up during the last 10 years. The poor, numbering half a million, consist of pensioners, students and the long-term unemployed and of people in the general workforce.

Child allowances, maintenance allowances and parental allowances must be increased

Comparatively, poverty in families with children has increased the most. Families in worst situations are single parent families and families with numerous children. The distinctions between well-off and poor start to develop early in life, and every fifth child is in danger of being marginalized. Finland is

developing a class society for children. To prevent this, benefits to poor families with children must be increased quickly. In addition to this, diverse families must be treated equally; all-male couples and all-female couples must be guaranteed their right to adopt and marry.

A more just pension system

Finns are ageing. It is usually seen as a negative trend, but an ageing population can also be a resource. It requires, however, that the basic living of pensioners is secured and that the public services support their well-being and health. Previously, those raising children at home did not accrue a pension and women's wage levels have been lower than men's. Due to this, the average pension for a woman has only been two thirds of the average pension for men. Small pensions must be increased and pension security of women must be improved.

High quality of public services must be maintained

Taxes must not be cut at the expense of public services. Public services of high quality are advantageous to all, particularly the weak. The most vulnerable in our society are those outside working life: the elderly, the children, the sick, the mentally ill, the seriously disabled and the long-term unemployed. The services facilitating the quality of life for these groups must be improved, instead of constantly reducing them in order to cut costs. The independent lives of disabled people and the everyday lives of rehabilitating mental patients are only enabled by special support by municipality or state. Cases of mental problems are increasing constantly, even with children and the young. Therefore it is essential that the financing of mental care services is secured.

The securing of services is not only just, it is also economical. It is cheaper to prevent problems than to solve them afterwards. In future we must be able to provide humane care to a growing number of the elderly. By emphasizing pre-emptive exercises and independent living by providing home care for the elderly, we improve their quality of life and reduce social and health care costs. By securing the living and well-being at work for family care givers, we can minimize the need for expensive institutional care. The elderly in institutional care must be provided with skilled and trained nursing staff.

Despite the general improvement in national health, the health differences between different age groups have not diminished. The Greens want to face this challenge with resolve. The central points in the solution are prevention of poverty and marginalization, early intervention (i.e. child welfare clinics and school healthcare) and an environment which promotes the maintaining of one's own physical, social and mental health.

Some services cannot be priced

The main responsibility for providing basic services falls to municipalities – and it should continue to do so. The state cannot leave the municipalities to fare on their own; rather it must secure sufficient funding for welfare services. Certain services cannot be made into businesses or outsourced. For example, library services cannot be made into a business of merely borrowing books; libraries are also for reading magazines, meeting people and using the Internet. Not all things have a price.

All municipalities are buying services. In these situations they must have the wisdom to assess what services to buy and how to buy them – and where to buy them. For example the child protection

organizations have unparalleled expertise in producing services in their own field. When putting services out to tender the municipalities must be allowed to choose whether they will acquire the services they need from non-profit organizations or from businesses.

Most of the power invested in municipal councils, has slipped away to a complex group of cooperative municipal organizations. A better alternative is to transfer, for example, health care decision making to provincial level and to elect provincial councils in direct elections. Power and responsibility must go hand in hand.

Culture is part of basic services

For the Greens, living culture has an intrinsic value as well as offering a means to achieving good living standards. Culture must be a part of every day life and belong to basic services. Through culture we give birth to a creative society. A supply of living culture has become one of the factors in regional success.

Free education of high quality

Children's success in life must not be dependant of their parents' economical position. Basic education must be of high quality and multiculturalism must be seen in schools. School well-being must be improved by decreasing class sizes, by increasing practical and arts subjects and by developing morning and afternoon activities as well as extra-curricular activities. Children are to be allowed to remain children and we must refrain from subjecting education to an over focus on efficiency.

Study allowance must be increased

Education and skills are Finland's advantages in global competition. Study allowance must be increased in order to let students focus on their main activity studying. Tuition fees would create both inequality and be a step in the wrong direction, if we wish to persuade more international students to study in Finland. The amount of teaching must not be decreased or the quality of education weakened in the name of productivity. Academic freedom has an intrinsic value, and it cannot be restrained. Fast and narrow degrees are an advantage to neither students nor employers. The Greens want to maintain academic freedom: students and researchers must have to the right to focus on fields and subjects of their own choice, even if their choices seem insignificant in the point of view of economic growth. Public funding of universities must be secured.

The Greens want

- to remove the wage gap between men and women and to facilitate life for families with children by raising the lowest parental allowance, child allowances and maintenance allowance
- to guarantee all-female couples and all-male couples the right to adopt and marry
- to increase labour market support and thus decrease the need for subsidy
- to improve basic security of the poorest pensioners by increasing national pensions
- to improve pension support of family care givers thus that, in a case of divorce, the pension support from the time of giving care is divided equally between the spouses
- to decrease alcohol-related harms by raising taxes on spirits
- to promote the rights of the seriously disabled to personal assistants

- to secure the earliest possible entry to mental rehabilitation care for patients
- to guarantee family care givers equal opportunity to work in the entire country by transferring the payment of allowances from municipalities to Kela, The Social Insurance Institution of Finland
- to secure production of services by civic organizations by giving municipalities the chance to favour NGOs and the services they provide when putting municipal services out to tender.
- to guarantee the operational preconditions of NGOs and their voluntary work
- to remove entrance fees from state museums
- to increase language training received by immigrants
- to secure the functioning of libraries as a local service
- to improve the quality of education by increasing the financing of basic education and upper secondary education
- to raise student allowance
- to secure public funding for higher education.

Economy Must Support Welfare, Employment and Equality

For the Greens, economy is a tool which should be used to improve quality of life and to promote sustainable development. Green competitiveness is based on service innovations, environment and energy technologies and helping small enterprises to flourish. Working must be made worthwhile at all times and wages must be at an appropriate level. The social security of short-term employees must be brought in line with long-term employees. Men and women must be guaranteed equal rights to work and have a family life.

Finland for leading country in environment and energy technology

Finland should be active in aiming to become the fore-runner in environment and energy technology. We have all the prerequisites to claim our share from the fast growing global environment and energy technology markets and promote the spread of eco-inventions at the same time. In a global world success requires strong commitment to education and research and the courage to favour sustainable innovations in domestic markets

Prosperity and jobs with renewable energy sources

By supporting renewable energy sources we can create tens of thousands of new jobs for Finland. By promoting the implementation of field and forest energies we can create badly needed jobs and vitality for rural areas. By subsidizing domestic wind power industry we strengthen our chances of success in future markets.

Creativity breeds growth

The increasing free-time, urbanization and the rising educational level have all made the culture sector the growing industry of the future. Creativity must become the foundation of Finnish economic growth. In a global world those who succeed are those who are able to create an open atmosphere for creativity and new innovations.

In a functioning economy businesses accept their share of the social responsibility. In the future this will be a genuine competition advantage. Responsible competitiveness includes caring for your living environment.

Conditions of small businesses must be improved

Small businesses employing few people must be treated differently than large industrial enterprises. Small business entrepreneurs must have their own legislation to reduce useless bureaucracy. The work related well-being of entrepreneurs must be improved by enabling them to hire employees. Small business entrepreneurs, especially female entrepreneurs, must be enabled to join working life and family life together by developing our social legislation.

Disabled people into the workforce

To exclude disabled people from working life is both economically and humanely unwise. The first step to correcting this is to raise the educational level of disabled people. Disabled people willing to work can be introduced into the workforce by reducing obstructions from workplaces, by increasing interpreter, assistant and rehabilitation services and by improving the flexibility of social security and working hours.

The shadow economy must be curtailed

We must fight the shadow economy persistently. Shadow economy hurts both businesses dealing fairly and employees who are treated poorly. The state is also suffering as it is losing tax revenues.

Versatile employment policies

Employment cannot be improved by relying merely on import sectors or high technological competence. To reduce unemployment and to support the welfare state we need jobs that do not require high levels of training or aptitude. By improving services we are creating jobs for ordinary people. At the same time we are supporting domestic work, which cannot be relocated. The same applies to local food. By promoting the usage of local food we support local employment, reduce transportation and increase the safety of food.

Consumption must be directed away from goods to services to reduce the environmental damages caused by economic growth. We can reduce taxes on work if we secure the financing of services by increasing environmental taxes. The green tax reformation 'kills two birds with one stone': it makes employing easier and reduces environmental impact. Tax cuts must primarily benefit people with low incomes.

Reforming basic security by basic income

Social security needs radical reform. We must enable employees to combine work with social security. In addition, the same social security must be afforded to those in short-term employment as to those in long-term employment. Basic income offers basic security to everybody. It is clearer and fairer than the

current system and it makes financial planning easier for people in temporary work. It also removes completely the humiliation added to social bureaucracy and encourages working.

Working must always be worthwhile

Basic income benefits everybody because it makes working always worthwhile and removes incentive traps. Basic income improves social security especially for entrepreneurs, artists, parents staying at home and people who are in atypical employment. This way it would support the birth of entrepreneurial and creative economy emphasizing culture and services and enable people to make choices according to their life situation.

Equality in working life must be improved

Equality in working life must be improved. Women's wages differ from men's wages in the same industry and it is more difficult for a woman to enter the leading positions in public sector or businesses than for men. Municipalities and state must lead the way in removing wage differences between the sexes. The glass roof must be broken. We must enable women to get into leading positions by using, for example, the quota system. Workforce equality must also apply to disabled people and immigrants.

Equal costs for parenthood

The discrimination of young women in labour market must end. The costs of raising a family must be divided genuinely between all employers. At the same time we must encourage fathers to participate more in the family life than they currently do. Equality benefits everybody in the end. Young women will fare better in the labour market and men will be allowed more room for being a parent.

Society must adapt, so that parent may spend time with their children. It is not right that employment is temporary when the need for the employee is permanent. Unjustified temporary employment must cease. State and the municipalities must at last pull themselves together and establish the positions of most of their temporary employees.

More time

People must have sufficient time to rest and to relax and to do things that they find meaningful. Only when they have rested are people capable of enjoying life and being creative and efficient. Work must be flexible: more and more people must have the possibility to do shorter working weeks, share their work or to have job-alternation leave. You must be able to change money for free time.

The Greens want

- to strengthen the competitiveness of Finnish businesses by subsidizing the development and research of environmental and energy technologies
- to promote the demand for renewable energy sources by introducing feed-in tariffs, i.e. the price subsidised procurement obligations
- to support people living in detached houses in transferring to sustainable energy solutions like ground source heat and different wood heating options
- to create jobs in rural areas by transforming fallow land into fields producing energy crops

- to promote small business entrepreneurship by creating its own, separate legislation
- to create new jobs by reducing the social security costs for first hired employee
- to develop new forms of sabbaticals and study leaves for people in the workforce
- to improve small business entrepreneurs' chances to combine work with family life by reviewing legislation
- to favour close and organic food in public procurements
- to reduce the harms caused by economic growth by moving the emphasis from taxing work to taxing environmental harm
- to reduce income disparities by directing tax cuts to people with low incomes
- to reform social security and to promote working by creating a basic income
- to reduce the wage differences between the sexes by improving the opportunities of shop stewards to intervene in wage discrimination
- to end the discrimination of young women in the labour market by sharing the costs of parenthood equally between all employers
- to designate fathers with a larger share of the current parental leaves
- to reduce the unjustified use of temporary employment, for example, by giving the trade unions better chances at intervening in unjustified usage of temporary employment.

Nature's Voice Must Be Heard – Man's Well-being is Dependant on Environment

Climate change must be stopped and the Baltic Sea Saved. We must not rob diverse nature from the future generations, and animals should be treated ethically. Old forests, unpolluted air and clean water are riches that we have to work for.

Climate change must be stopped

Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity's well-being. By determined policies we can restrain global warming to two degrees. This is why we must halve all global climate emissions by 2050s. All the biggest polluters must be included. The time frame in responsible climate policies is not electoral period rather than centuries.

In Finland the goal must be to cut all emissions to a fifth of the current rate by 2050. The portion of domestic, renewable energy out of the overall energy consumption must be doubled within 20 years. We can accomplish that with an ambitious but realistic climate policy.

Emission trade must be developed

In principle, emission trade is an efficient way of reducing emissions. But there have been some serious mistakes made in implementing it. The profits made by energy corporations have increased, but little has been done to invest those profits into renewable energy sources. Competition in the electricity market is not functioning as it should, which raises electricity prices. The emission rights should be auctioned and unjustified profits made by electricity companies must be taxed and the revenues should be directed into the introduction of renewable energy sources.

To safe energy policies

Price of oil is increasing inevitably and the competition for energy is becoming more intense. We must reinforce our energy self-sufficiency and draw a plan to free ourselves from oil dependency. The consumption of energy continues to increase in Finland, unlike in Sweden and Denmark, for example. Making energy usage more efficient and conserving energy must become our primary goals. We can become more efficient by creating energy norms for constructing, by informing and by financial incentives. When we invest enough on making energy consumption more efficient and on renewable energy forms, we do not have the need for more nuclear power – neither domestic or as a Russian import. We do not want any uranium mines in Finland nor additional nuclear waste. People should be able to trust that their opinions count and that their homes are safe to live in and will remain so in the future.

Transport dependency must be reduced

We must reduce the dependency on commuting by sound community planning and by promoting remote work.

We must offer attractive alternatives for private car usage in cities as well as in rural areas. In green Finland more people have the option of choosing whether to go and do their grocery shopping by foot or by bicycle, or whether to use train or a car on their way to work. In the Helsinki Metropolitan Area at least we must introduce rush hour charges. At the same time we must create attractive alternatives for driving. This means we have to develop public transportation ambitiously: new routes, more bus departures and unobstructed means of transportation.

Green traffic policies reduce our dependency on oil. We have to scale car taxation strictly on emission basis. This way we encourage people to choose low emission vehicles. The benefit shows itself in consumers' own economy as reduced fuel costs. At the same time we must accelerate the introduction of biofuels.

Towards more eco-efficient society

In utilizing waste, the primary concern is the decreasing of waste generation and then recycling. Utilizing waste as an energy source is justifiable if the waste would otherwise end up at a waste disposal site. We cannot accept mass burning of bagged waste. It does not fit the Finnish energy system because it is a threat to more efficient co-production of electricity and heat.

With the help of new technology and economical guidance we can significantly increase the eco-efficiency of our society. This enables us to create more prosperity with less emissions, waste and energy consumption. Choosing the green alternative in everyday life must be made nice and easy – and cheap.

More money for nature conservation

There are about thousand endangered species living in Finnish forests. The forests and marshes of Southern Finland need a conservation programme of their own to secure biodiversity. At the same time we must secure financing for voluntary conservation of privately owned forests. Forestry and using

forests for recreational purposes must be developed to take nature into better consideration. Great predator population in the whole of Finland must be on a sustainable level. Regional concentrations of great predators must be avoided. Damages caused by great predators must be compensated in full. In addition to diversity of species, we must also look after the well-being of individual animals. All animals must be guaranteed an opportunity for species-specific behaviour, even in industrial surroundings. Organic animal husbandry must be increased and subsidized financially. We must also take more steps towards more biodynamic animal production even in ordinary production where the well-being of animals is threatened by pursuit of smaller production costs.

Emergency help for the Baltic Sea

The alarming state of the Baltic Sea requires prompt actions. Finland must especially reduce farming, fishing industry and traffic emissions. Together with the other Baltic Sea States we have to decrease the risk of oil spills, support the purifying of sewage in Russia and reduce the farming emissions. You must be able to swim in the Baltic Sea without fearing for poisonous algae.

The Greens want

- to free Finland from oil dependency by the year 2030
- to pass legislation on conserving energy and to halve the energy needs in new constructions
- to direct the profits from emission trade to developing renewable energy sources
- to renew the outdated mining legislation and to secure people's opportunities to have an effect on their surroundings
- to encourage the choosing of low emission vehicles by scaling taxes on cars by emissions and by removing the tax on diesel
- to introduce rush hour charges in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area
- to improve public transportation by increasing significantly the financing of public transportation and rail projects
- to reduce waste generation by establishing a service centre for matter efficiency and by taxing waste burning and private waste disposal sites
- to direct the utilizing of waste into energy thus that it does not threaten the co-production of electricity and heat, and that it encourages waste reduction
- to draw up a conservation plan for forests and marshes of South Finland and to secure the financing of voluntary forest conservation
- to remove excess share on damages caused by great predators
- to replace the most problematic forms of production from the point of view of animal well-being such as the current efficient poultry farming with ethically sustainable production methods
- to decrease the pollutant loads on the Baltic Sea by improving the environmental directing of farming subsidies.

Fair Globalization – Justice Breeds Security

Mankind is wealthier than ever. We have the means and the finances to feed and educate every children of the world. Globalization must become fairer and global decisions must be made more democratically. To increase security means to eradicate poverty, respecting human rights and emphasizing the prevention of conflicts beforehand. Multiculturalism is a fortune even for native Finns.

Education for all the children of the world

Mankind has the means to educate every children in the world, to give information about contraception to all those who need it, and to eradicate extreme poverty from the world. We in Finland can afford to raise our development aid to the level proposed by the United Nations. Development cooperation is, however, not enough. We have to transform the structures of global trade to become fairer. The poorer countries must have the possibility of offering their own products in the global market. We must make international financing institutions more democratic by strengthening the conditions with which the developing countries can participate in negotiations as equal partners.

We need common rules

The European Union must be developed in such a way that it can better face the challenges of globalization. We need a stronger Union to defend prosperity and environment – and less interfering by the Union in matters which are better suited for national or regional levels. The EU must promote the creation of internationally bounding rules for states and corporations.

The many threatening scenarios such as environmental catastrophes, the threat of terrorism or the collapsing states cannot be confronted with military alliances. We do not need NATO membership to certify our security. Instead, we need cooperation to prevent the scenarios from realising. We must improve UN's chances to interfere in global security threats.

Security as a whole

The European Union has a wide array of tools for preventing conflicts. Expansion, diplomacy, development aid, civilian crisis management and military crisis management are all means of preventing crisis before they occur. As a member of the Union, Finland must actively seek to affect the way the Union practices security policies. Security must be understood in a wide sense so that it encompasses, for example, environmental threats, and civilian crisis management must be emphasized more than we currently do. Women must also join the building of peace after conflicts; you cannot build a lasting peace without the other half of mankind. We must defend human rights tirelessly and courageously, and countering terrorism should not mean trampling on human rights.

To selective national service

Participating in the Union's common security policies reinforces Finland's own security. We in Finland can follow the footsteps of other EU nations and proceed gradually to selective national service. At the

same time we can reform the national service to better correspond to new threats. Non-military service must become shorter than it now is. As a member of the Union, Finland is bound to support the EU's common goals and interests. Finnish democracy must, however, be responsible for all defence and security policy related issues also in the future.

Nuclear proliferation must be stopped

The peaceful use of nuclear power and nuclear proliferation are closely connected. Finland must actively support the realisation and monitoring of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty. As the use of civilian nuclear power spreads, the risk of nuclear weapons ending up with terrorists increases. For that reason alone, we must decrease the usage of nuclear power. We must also be able to control the illegal arms trade and proliferation of small arms more efficiently than today.

More humane immigration policies

Finland must reform its immigration policies. Immigration policies are not security policies. Essentially, immigration policies include employment issues and family policies as well as development cooperation. The treatment of asylum seekers must become more humane and authority procedures must become more transparent. The position of victims of human trafficking must be improved. Immigrating for working or studying must be made easier. You can get started in working life even if you do not know all the noun inflexions yet.

Immigrants enrich our culture. They must also have the right to maintain and develop their own culture. We need better ability to face diversity in ourselves as in others. In Finland everybody must follow the laws and the rules of the land. Human rights and equality cannot be trampled on by pleading to culture.

Global environmental organization

Solving international environmental problems requires cooperation between all states. Global environmental policies need stronger leaders. There must be an international environmental organization established under the UN.

The Greens want

- to raise Finland's development aid to 0.7 percent, as the UN suggests, by year 2010
- to create new financing systems, such as the international flight tax, for funding development aid
- to remove import subsidies which are harmful for the poorest of the developing countries
- to increase transparency in the EU and to reduce bureaucracy
- to advocate in the EU for minimum levels for corporate, environmental and capital taxes
- to establish a security committee for the Finnish Parliament to monitor general security
- to act to reform and reinforce the UN's system
- to make international financing institutions more democratic by supporting the participation of developing countries in negotiations
- to proceed to selective national service and to develop the contents of the national service
- to end imprisoning conscientious objectors who refuse from non-military for their opinions

- to reduce the number of b-permits granted to asylum seekers and instead grant them permanent asylum, and to make the position of those who have received their permits equitable
- to improve the position of victims of human trafficking by prolonging their permits of residence
- to facilitate immigration for working and studying, for example, by improving the chances of foreigners to seek for jobs and to get a working permits within Finland,
- to establish a global environmental organization under the UN to promote international environmental policies