

Green Parties in Europe: Potential Routes of Future Development

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Abstract

This article provides a descriptive analysis of the performances of Green parties in Europe, aiming to explore factors that are crucial for understanding the differences of their success. Concentrating on two areas of interest, namely the parliamentary representation of Green parties across Europe and the complex interaction between the Europeanization process and European integration on one side and the development of Green parties in Europe on the other, the authors aim to detect potential routes of future development of green politics in Europe and question to which extent party evolution will be linked to adjustment strategies in different cultural and political environments.

Special attention is paid to the assessment of the importance of the EU membership and on the dynamic relationship between transnational political structures that are a new form of political organisation in Europe.

Key words: Green parties, European Union, European Parliament, Europeanization

1. Introduction

Green parties in Europe have passed a long way in the past 40 years from protest parties to mainstream political parties. At the beginning of the 1970s first national Green parties were founded

in the United Kingdom and Belgium. However, it took a decade or two for the green political movement to make a breakthrough to the core of political life in some of the European countries. We waited until the 1990s for Green parties to lead national politics. This happened in 1995 in Finland when the Green League became the first Green party in Europe to participate in the national government.¹ Most successful, although of short duration, was the Latvian Green party which in 2004 even had the Prime Minister of Latvia. He was the first Green Prime Minister of a state in history.² In the case of Germany, the unforgettable example of Joschka Fischer, who served as Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of Germany in the cabinet of Gerhard Schröder is certainly notable, as he was not only one of the leading figures of West

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German Greens but also one of the most popular German politicians.³ Today the majority of the EU countries have a Green party in the national and regional parliaments, while the Greens faction is playing a significant role as one of the relevant political forces in the European Parliament. Greens are currently participating in governments of two EU countries – namely Denmark and Finland, while Baden-Württemberg is the first German federal state in history that has a Prime Minister from a Green party.⁴

On the other hand, in Central and Eastern Europe societies are still undergoing a process of struggle for political identities trying to find equivalents of the political movements that have emerged in the old democracies. In many cases Green parties, as a relatively new element in the political landscape of these countries, fail to position themselves and gain the trust of voters and are thus playing a marginal role. However, sporadic successes (like in the Czech Republic, Hungary or Latvia) show that this breakthrough is possible, although still not sufficiently stable.

After more than a three-decade long trajectory composed of continuous efforts and long marching through institutions⁵, Greens today are an inevitable political subject in many European countries, experiencing visible upturn in support. In some of these countries Greens have successfully transcended the boundaries of environmentalism, showing a variety of competences in the fields of foreign affairs, education or development. Most recent electoral results also clearly indicate that Greens are clearing their way to the centre of the political spectrum⁶; both through adaptation to the ‘mainstream’ language but also through the increase of competences in economy⁷ and successful discourse on multiple crises.⁸ A long trajectory of the idea of deep ecological crisis (and its economic and social impacts) announced by Greens as early as the 1980s, brought Greens from the periphery to the centre of political debate and in most cases has shown their consistency and ability to make their point in the long run. However, it has also shown risks of the adjustment, resulting in internal struggles like the one during the decision-making on military intervention in Kosovo in 1999. In some other European countries, mainly in the Mediterranean, with the exception of sporadic electoral successes that occur in some of the regions or provinces (Greece or Spain can serve

as examples)⁹, Greens have been traditionally unable to consolidate themselves as a relevant political force. In Central and Eastern Europe, Greens appeared already in the first period of transition as one of the ‘political choices’ in the newly discovered party pluralism (for instance in Slovenia), but have quickly disappeared.¹⁰ Only recently, in the last few years some successes of Green parties emerged in Central Eastern Europe (Estonia, Hungary or the Czech Republic),¹¹ but their breakthrough seems an extremely difficult endeavour that becomes less possible with the potential slide down to nationalistic agendas in Europe (see the last example of Hungary).

Green parties in Europe are now well established in party systems of various countries and they have outlived many scholars who marked them as an anomaly that would soon vanish from the political scene. Their electoral success and party consolidation are the strongest in the most developed European countries such as Germany, France, Sweden or Austria. However, there is an evident discrepancy between the well established Green parties and their quite effective performances in the ‘West’ on one side, and, on the other, unstable, sporadic, if not rare breakthroughs of the Greens in the Mediterranean countries or the East where they face severe difficulties to find their way to national parliamentary representation. This is not only due to unfavourable electoral systems, but also due to diverse economic and social pre-conditions. This article aims to describe the current representation of Green parties in Europe and show in which European countries they are successful and in which they are not. With an overview of specific country situations regarding the EU membership, the article discusses whether the EU membership is a factor important for success of Green parties in the European countries measured through parliamentary representation. Additionally, there seem to be some macro socio-economic factors influencing the success of Green parties for which this article provides only preliminary evidence and analysis. For example, the emergence of different types of Green parties throughout Europe has initially been followed by thought about a certain model of structure, while only afterwards understanding of the national context and respective pressure exerted upon them was taken into account as a new variable. As Green parties matured, they recognised that their actions needed to be calibrated in a way to suit both the national

political context and the sort of party activism that organically developed within the party itself.¹²

The second aspect in the focus of this article is a multi-fold relationship between the process of European integration and development of Green parties. This relationship seems more important for Green parties than for other European political families due to inherently transnational political objectives of Green parties¹³. It seems that over a few decades there has been a significant influence of the European integration process on political behaviour of Green parties in Europe. However, we can also track the impact in the opposite direction, recognising the disproportional impact of very focused green political agendas on large scale policy making on the European level. For the Greens, two processes, i.e. formation of the European Green Party (EGP), and consolidation of The Greens/EFA political group in the European Parliament have become dominant but intertwined trajectories of the European level political development through which they were able to formulate their political positions and design their relevance at the EU level.

Here the authors highlight the question to which extent and in which mutual interrelationship these two processes design the future of Green parties' performances. Accordingly, the article aims to explore if the European Green Party as a transnational form of political organisation driven by the Europeanization process proved to be a decisive factor for more efficient and effective political actions or whether this influence is still predominantly generated through cooperation of different national Green parties that communicate mainly with their constituencies without directly addressing the European *demos*. Though the intention of this article is not to deliver undisputable conclusions; by posing these questions we aim to underline the importance of this relationship. The authors of the article assume that there is a strong and not yet fully discovered linkage between the consolidation of the Green political movement and the idea of European integration that needs to be explored further.

2. Current parliamentary representation of green parties in Europe

When speaking about Green parties in Europe one usually refers only to Green parties that joined the

pan-European federation of Green parties called - the European Green Party (EGP).¹⁴ Greens were in the 1980s among the first political families in Europe that started to organise on the EU level and unlike other party families such as the Socialists or Liberals, they decided to form a pan-European federation of national Green parties, accepting as full members parties from any European country and not just the EU.¹⁵ Currently the EGP has 38 Green parties as full members and 9 Green parties as observers, covering almost all European countries.¹⁶

Although the EGP works outside of the EU borders, its biggest impact is within the framework of the European Union. Although the EGP functions as a separate transnational political party having Green parties from almost all European countries as its members, it also functions as a parallel structure that is indirectly using the political potential of its members in multifold ways; through the European Parliament or national parliaments. Green parties that are members of the EGP currently have 46 Members of the European Parliament out of a total of 736, which makes it only 6.25 %. However, Green MEPs decided to join forces with 12 MEPs of regionalist, autonomist parties united in the European Free Alliance and they formed "The Greens/European Free Alliance" which is the fourth group in size in the European Parliament, following Christians-Democrats, Socialists and Liberals. The Greens/EFA are the only group in the European Parliament which has more female (30) than male (28) MEPs, while overall statistics of the European Parliament show that there are in total only 34.8 % of female MEPs.¹⁷ The Greens/EFA is also the only group in the European Parliament that has a gender-balanced Co-Presidency (currently Rebecca Harms from Germany and Daniel Cohn-Bendit from France).

To describe and compare the success of Green parties in Europe it is easiest to start by comparing the successes of Green parties in elections for the European Parliament because electoral rules are similar for all EU states, i.e. based on a proportional system. Table 1 shows the representation of Green parties in the European Parliament since 2009. It displays the names of the Green parties, the number of the seats they have in the European Parliament and the ratio of these seats compared to the total number of seats of the respective country.

Table 1 - List of Green parties in the European Parliament 2009 - 2011

Country	Number of country MEPs (A)	Number of Green MEPs (B)	Name of the Green Party	Ratio of Green MEPs (B / A)
Austria	17	2	Die Grünen	11.76 %
Belgium	22	3	Ecolo - 2 / Groen! - 1	13.63 %
Bulgaria	17	0	-	0
Cyprus	6	0	-	0
Czech Republic	22	0	-	0
Denmark	13	2	Socialistisk Folkeparti	15.38 %
Estonia	6	0	-	0
Finland	13	2	Vihreät	15.38 %
France	72	13	Europe Ecologie - Les Verts	18.05 %
Germany	99	14	Bündnis/Die Grünen	14.14 %
Greece	22	1	Ecologoi Prasinoi	4.54 %
Hungary	22	0	-	0
Ireland	12	0	-	0
Italy	72	0	-	0
Latvia	8	0	-	0
Lithuania	12	0	-	0
Luxembourg	6	1	Déi Gréng	16.66 %
Malta	5	0	-	0
Netherlands	25	3	GroenLinks	12.00 %
Poland	50	0	-	0
Portugal	22	0	-	0
Romania	33	0	-	0
Slovakia	13	0	-	0
Slovenia	7	0	-	0
Spain	50	1	Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds	2.00 %
Sweden	18	2	Miljöpartiet De Gröna	11.11 %
United Kingdom	72	2	The Green Party	2.77 %
TOTAL	736	46	European Green Party	6.25 %

Source for data: www.europeangreens.eu and www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/

First of all, it is important to note that less than half of the EU member states (12 out of 27) have currently a Green party represented in the European Parliament. It seems that representation according to countries is pretty stable because all countries that now have Green MEPs, also had them in the previous (6th) term of the European Parliament with the exception of Greece.¹⁸ If we look at the number of MEPs, the most influential are Green

parties from Germany (14) and France (13) which is expectedly reflected in the German- French Co-Chairmanship of the group Greens/EFA.

It is important to note that currently none of the 12 “new EU member states” has a Green party represented in the European Parliament. With the exception of Malta and Cyprus the rest of the countries from that group are from Central

and Eastern Europe.¹⁹ The reasons for the failure of Green parties from Central and Eastern Europe to enter the European Parliament can range from democratic consolidation and other political factors, socio-economic and cultural factors described in a comprehensive book on development of Green parties in Europe called *Green Challenge*, edited by Richardson and Rootes in 1995. They stated that no single theory can explain the diverse development and success of European Green parties but it seems from electoral results of Green parties in EU and non-EU countries that there are some common socio-economic factors that determine such success.

The third point to note is that with the exception of the UK, which has a specific party system, all of the most developed Western European countries or to use Wallerstein's terminology²⁰ "Western European states from the core", have successful Green parties at European elections with a double digits percentage that shows their ratio in total number of seats reserved for the respective country. These include France (18.05 %), Luxembourg (16.66 %), Denmark (15.38 %), Finland (15.38 %), Germany (14.40 %), Belgium (13.63 %), Austria (11.76 %) and Sweden (11.11 %). To sum it up in a more simple way: Benelux, Scandinavia, France, Germany and Austria.

For example, one of the most profound pillars of the European green political scene is the example of the German Greens (Die Grünen/Bündnis 90) who were founded in 1980 to give political and parliamentary representation to the movement of environmentalists, peace and feminist activists. They opposed NATO military actions, nuclear energy and pollution in general, but also authoritarianism and some aspects of industrialisation. Thus, they represented a classic 'patchwork' party. Their members originated from protest movements, civil initiatives and student movements, but to some extent also from the conservative spectrum. They gained first parliamentary representation at the federal level in the 1980s and became known as an unconventional party that has shaken up the usual patterns of political behaviour. From the late 1990s to 2005 they have been part of the ruling government. Their voters mainly originate from large urban areas or smaller cities with long university traditions or environmental problems.²¹ For some time, Greens needed to balance their dual role as a social movement and political party,

facing the choice between staying 'pure' and accepting compromises, like external funding that fundamentalists see as corrupting.²² Over the last 30 years, German Greens became a representative example of an institutionalised and professional party through various processes of political development and change.²³

The fourth thing to point out from Table 1 is that Green parties from "old" but peripheral EU member states are poorly represented in the European Parliament. These include Greece (4.54 %) and Spain (2.00 %), while Portugal and Ireland don't have a Green party represented in the European Parliament. To this group of countries we can add Italy, another "old member state" with no Green MEPs in the European Parliament. If we look at possible economical reasons for this situation it is interesting to see that all heavy-indebted "old EU member states", also known as PIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain), are in the group of countries that have Green parties poorly or not represented at all in the European Parliament. A potential simplistic economic explanation might be that only the richest countries in the EU can "afford" to have successful Green parties that root their programs in post-materialistic values, while less rich Western European countries and less developed countries from Central and Eastern Europe have them poorly represented in the European Parliament or not represented at all.

Table 1 shows comparative data on the success of Green parties at the last European elections but the success of Green parties might be different at national elections. In order to analyse to what extent Green parties from the EU states are successful in elections for their respective national parliaments and whether they are more or less successful in European elections comparing to national elections, Table 2 provides comparative data on the electoral results of Green parties at the last parliamentary elections that took place in each of the countries. To simplify the comparison, the numbers do not reflect the distinction between bicameral and unicameral parliaments, showing a summed up number of seats won in both chambers.

Table 2 - Results of EU Green parties at the last elections for the National Parliament (NP) and the European Parliament (EP)

Country	Name of the Green Party (members of European Green Party)	Seats in the NP	Last NP election results	Last EP election results	Seats in the EP
Austria	Die Grünen	23	10.43 %	9.93 %	2
Belgium	Ecolo + Groen!	16 (10 + 6)	12.3% + 6.9 %	8.65% + 4.91 %	3 (2+1)
Bulgaria	Zelenite	0	-	0.72 %	0
Cyprus	Cyprus Green Party	1	2.21 %	1.50 %	0
Czech Republic	Strana Zelenych	0	2.44 %	2.06 %	0
Denmark	Socialistisk Folkeparti	16	9.20 %	15.90 %	2
Estonia	Eestimaa Rohelised	0	3.80 %	2.73 %	0
Finland	Vihreät	10	7.30 %	12.40 %	2
France	Europe Ecologie - Les Verts	9	3.25 %	16.20 %	13
Germany	Bündnis/Die Grünen	68	10.70 %	12.10 %	14
Greece	Ecologoi Prasinoi	0	2.53 %	3.49 %	1
Hungary	Lehet Más a Politika (LMP)	16	7.48 %	2.61 %	0
Ireland	Comhaontas Glas	0	1.80 %	1.89 %	0
Italy	Federazione dei Verdi	0	(coal.) 3.08 %	(coal.) 3.12 %	0
Latvia	Latvijas Zala Partija	4	3.75 %	(coal.) 3.79 %	0
Lithuania	-	-	-	-	0
Luxembourg	Déi Gréng	7	11.71 %	16.82 %	1
Malta	Alternattiva Demokratika	0	1.31 %	2.14 %	0
Netherlands	GroenLinks	14	6.70 %	8.87 %	3
Poland	Zieloni 2004	0	(coal.) 8.0 %	(coal.) 2.43 %	0
Portugal	Os Verdes	2	0.99 %	(coal.) 10.66 %	0
Romania	Partidul Verde	0	-	-	0
Slovakia	Strana Zelenych	0	0.70 %	2.11 %	0
Slovenia	Stranka Mladih - Zeleni Evrope	0	2.09 %	1.96 %	0
Spain (Catalunya)	Iniciativa per Catalunya - Verds	3	(coal.) 8.09 %	6.09 %	1
Sweden	Miljöpartiet De Gröna	25	7.34 %	11.02 %	2
United Kingdom	GP England Wales+ Scotish GP	3 (1+2)	1.0 % + 0.7 %	8.6 % + 0.5 %	2 (2+0)

Source for data: www.europeangreens.eu and www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/

One can see that in almost all 12 EU countries having a Green party represented in the European Parliament the Green party is also represented in the national parliament. This seems logical since Green parties should first of all be well established in their domestic party system before they can win a seat in the European Parliament. Nevertheless, Greece is an exception to that rule and it is the only country which currently has a Green party

represented in the European Parliament and not having it in the national parliament although the Greek Green party was not far from passing a threshold of 3 % at national elections which would result in parliamentary representation.

We can also see that the vast majority of 15 EU member states that do not have a Green party represented in the European Parliament also

do not have it represented in their national parliament. There are however few exceptions to that rule - Hungary, Cyprus and Latvia. These three countries coming from the group of "new EU member states" have Green parties represented in the national parliaments but these Green parties have not succeeded to win a seat in the current term of the European Parliament. This might lead us to an even more convincing conclusion that it is more difficult for Green parties to enter the European Parliament. It seems from this data that there is no shortcut for Greens to the European Parliament by skipping the national parliament. This is bad news for the European Green Party that aims to be a pan-European political party but it still depends on the success of its member-parties on national elections.

It is also interesting to compare results of the elections for a national parliament and for the European Parliament but bearing in mind that this comparison is quite limited because national elections were held at different times across Europe and because Green parties sometimes went on elections in coalitions with other parties. From the found data it seems that the majority of Green parties represented in the European Parliament have better results in the European than in national elections. Out of 12 countries in this group belong France (+12.95 %), United Kingdom (+7.6 %), Denmark (+6.70 %), Luxembourg (+5.11 %), Finland (+5.10 %), Netherlands (+2.12 %), Germany

(+1.40 %) and Greece (+0.96 %). Austria has approximately the same results while, for some reasons, significantly worse results in the European elections have both Green parties in Belgium. The presumption for these better European results is that Green parties were often inclined towards deeper integration of the European Union (although often critical towards the EU centralist and technocratic governance model) so there is a bigger turnout of voters for a Green party on European elections comparing to voters of other parties. The second reason might be the one suggested by Ferrara and Weishaupt²⁴ who claim that parties which have clear positions towards European integration (positive or negative) have better results in elections for the European Parliament. In their 2004 article they also conclude that Green parties get better results in European elections comparing to other parties and it is a fact that lately Green parties in most cases have clear positions towards European integrations and the EU.

We have so far presented and compared the parliamentary representation of Green parties in the European Union. Table 3 shows the electoral success of Green parties in European parliamentary democracies that are not members of the European Union. The Table provides the names of Green parties in these countries, their relationship to the European Green Party, parliamentary representation as well as the results in the last parliamentary elections.

Table 3 - List of Green parties in non-EU countries and their performance in national elections

Country	Name of the Green Party (members of the European Green Party)	Membership in the EGP	Seats in the NP	Last election results for the NP
Albania	Partia el Gjelber	Full	0	0
Andorra	Verts d'Andorra	Full	0	3.75 %
Armenia	Social - Ecological Green Party	Non - member	0	-
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan Green Party	Observer	0	-
Belarus	Biealruskaja Partija Zialonye	Observer	0	-
Bosnia & Herzegovina	-	-	0	-
Croatia	Zelena Lista	Observer	0	0.24 %
Georgia	Sakartvelo's Mtsvaneta Partia	Full	0	-
Iceland	Left - Green Movement	Non - member	14	21.68 %
Liechtenstein	-	-	0	-
Macedonia	-	-	0	-
Moldova	PEM AVE	Full	0	0.41 %
Montenegro	-	-	0	-
Norway	Miljøpartiet De Grønne	Full	0	0.35 %
Russia	Zelenaya Alternativa	Full	0	-
San Marino	-	-	0	-
Serbia	Zeleni	Observer	0	-
Switzerland	Grüne / Verts	Full	21	9.6 %
Turkey	Yesiller	Observer	0	-
Ukraine	Partija Zelnykh Ukrainy	Full	0	0.4 %

Source for data: www.europeangreens.eu and www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/

First it could be noticed that neither of the non-EU countries from Central and Eastern Europe has a Green party represented in the national parliament. This corresponds to the situation where the majority of the EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe have no Green party represented in their national parliament either (with the exceptions of Hungary and Latvia).

Even more interesting is to have a closer look at the results of Green parties in Western European countries that are not members of the EU. Switzerland expectedly has a successful Green party with 9.6 % of votes. Iceland has a quite successful "Green party" which is now even participating in the government but it has to be stressed that this party is not affiliated with the European Green Party but with the Nordic Green Left Alliance. While the EGP has no Green party in Iceland

either as a full-member or as an observer, it has a full-member party in Norway called "Miljøpartiet De Grønne" which performs badly. That said, it would be a mistake to say that Green parties in Norway are not represented in the national parliament because, like in Iceland, there is another "Green party" called "Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV)" which is also not affiliated with the EGP but with the Nordic Green Left Alliance. From their policy and self-identification one can see that they are truly a Green party like the parties in Denmark and Iceland. SV from Norway had 6.20 % of votes while the Left-Green Movement from Iceland had 21.68 % of votes at the last national elections.

All in all, it seems that EU membership is not a significant factor for electoral success and parliamentary representation of Green parties in Europe. It seems that EU membership did not help

Green parties from Central and Eastern Europe to win representation in national parliaments neither did staying outside of the EU help Green parties in Central and Eastern Europe to develop and get representation in national parliaments. Obviously, some economic, social, cultural or political factors common for all countries of Central and Eastern Europe determine their performances, preventing political success of Green parties regardless of their membership in the EU. On the other hand, Switzerland, Iceland and Norway, as rich Western European countries, have successful Green parties. The fact that they are not EU members seems irrelevant.

Still, this relationship should not be misleading and support the conclusion that the European Union as an institutional and political landscape is not important for the development of Green parties, especially in the core Western European states. On the contrary, it can lead us to another avenue of thought that relates the impact of the European integration process to the behaviour and positioning of Green parties. For Greens it can mean professionalization and de-ideologization that has occurred in a number of parties, which, disproportionately to their size, have become more successful and effective at the European level, thus alienating themselves from their initial and fundamental core idea. This process has irreversibly worn out the sharp language of the anti-party discourse that has been the trademark of the Greens' appearance in the political spectrum and demonstrated that Greens have successfully developed their strategy of adaptation.

3. Green parties and European integration

In the last two decades Greens have increasingly advocated more cooperation and solidarity in Europe. Most of the Green parties, apart from a few examples (Germany, France), remain small but often play a pivotal role in party systems across Europe.²⁵ Like other political families, they face many challenges of Europeanization²⁶, but some are unique only for the Greens. The Greens are still perceived as new, as young, as those who are more flexible and can more easily adapt – and this adaptation refers also to the processes triggered by the European integration.

The relationship between the Greens and the idea of European integration was always very

complex²⁷ or even controversial.²⁸ From the very beginning, both the EU integration and the EU institutions represented something that the Greens ideologically opposed; namely technocracy, inter-governmental politics and the dominance of market principles. Fit between the ideology and the EU, attempts of the Greens to adapt to these imperatives sometimes got lost in internal clashes or never ending negotiations within themselves. Taking environmental sustainability, social justice, global justice and grassroots democracy both as objectives and departure points of their political activity, it was implied that these can be achieved only through international attention, global view, multilateralism and intense cooperation. Therefore, European integration interpreted in the way of transboundary cooperation and increased cooperation beyond the realms of nation-states was not disruptive for the Green idea, just the opposite, it contributed to core values of grassroots democracy and efforts to build a European *demos*. Eventually, it seems that parties, as Burchell notes, found balance between 'new politics'²⁹ and the realities of competitive party systems. Along the way, there were prices which needed to be paid – mainly due to accepting more pragmatic or realistic approaches, thus loosing part of the value rooted electorate.

The transnational character of the issues addressed by Greens and their endeavour to build up a European *demos*, make them advocates of deeper integration of the European Union.³⁰ Yet, this statement can still be challenged as the formation of the European Green Party had different phases in which true European values were heavily tested.³¹

However, as carriers of the idea of political constitutionalization of the EU, Greens caught a good wind and steered into the political successes in the last two decades, becoming more and more effective in advocating certain common European policies. Although most of their political actions were shaped in direction to create a more integrated Europe³², to ensure participatory democracy and the highest environmental standards, and therefore focused their criticism toward EU institutions, Greens have actually largely benefited from the process of Europeanization and further integration of the EU, thus becoming one of the frontrunners of integration.³³ As Bomberg states, although European integration did not deliver significant benefits to the integration of Green parties

institutionally, European integration did provide significant transnational resources and opportunities lacking at national level. The European Parliament became the main sphere for Green political and policy activity, while Green representation in other EU bodies has provided them with policy-making exposure and influence hardly imaginable a decade ago. Although sometimes with reluctance, Green parties have increasingly exploited these resources and became more sophisticated political actors at the EU level. In these terms, direct impact of Europeanization can be easily detected as it prepared Greens for power in ways that were not seen in other parties.³⁴

At this point it is quite important to highlight this process in the interrelationship between the two avenues of action – firstly, the EGP as a transnational political context which formally resides outside of the EU institutions and secondly, Green group in the EP that acts as the green player in the transnational political arena. Though it is recognised as an undoubtedly strategic outcome of activities within the EGP, ownership and credit for political successes still go to the individual Green parties in the member states and MEPs active in the Green group in the European Parliament. This institutional gap is beneficial when it ensures the diversity of forms of political organisation, and distributes control over political processes. On the other hand, it creates a certain confusion as structurally the European Green family works in the ‘mirror’: EGP’s strategies cannot be directly transpositioned to the political arena but they need to be delegated to Green MPs and MEPs active there; then they reversibly shape the EGP agenda. Therefore it seems that the transnational level of politics to which EGP aspires is still not reached in the EU at institutional and regulatory level, and Greens themselves are not yet able to take the risk and be the lonely example of subordinating national agendas to a transnational political organisation that in this case could take over the power which currently resides in the national parliaments. This illustrates clear limitations of the current state-of-art in the sphere of European integration; if the next step toward deeper integration would be achievable, that could have positive implications for transnational political families, and particularly for the EGP which is waiting for its moment. Another aspect which is extremely important and demonstrates that EGP is again in the forefront of other political families is the mem-

bership in the EGP that is not reduced to the EU. Paradoxically, although not within the political framework of the EU, the EGP is the pioneering political force consistently reflecting aspirations of European enlargement and neighbourhood policies working actively on the support for Mediterranean, Balkan or Black Sea green networks. Taking this as an example, we can state that the EGP both follows the line of the EU policies in their own program, but also preserves their own zone of autonomy and emancipation with continuity of activity in this field, during the overall fatigue in the EU.

After all, political consolidation and major successes of Green parties are closely linked in their march through national institutions Europe-wide, due to solid achievements in their respective national and regional parliaments. These successes need to be assessed not only from the nation state perspectives, but from the overall European perspective, referring to the Greens as a widely present political subject. There are even some evidences that European Parliament’s Rules of Procedure produced imperatives for increased cooperation that helped to reduce factionalism and promote professionalism within European Greens. These facilitated their ‘Europeanization’ and allowed them to affect the course of European integration.³⁵ As Bomberg notes, the Europeanization of parties resulted in the enhancement of current trends, rather than the establishment of new practices. It provided certain issues (like clean government, better governance etc.) which they can exploit for electoral gain and “plugging in” mainstream discourse without necessary alienation from their core values.³⁶ However, participation in these processes eventually did mellow the ideology and increased professionalism and effectiveness³⁷, thus loosing somewhat of the beginners charm.³⁸

In spite of that, or just due to that, some of their demands were gradually incorporated in diverse EU policy settings making their efforts visible and effective. Greens have successfully adapted and learned the language of EU policy-making thus loosening the ties with their fundamental core electorate, approaching closer to the mainstream.³⁹ Most recent developments in energy or climate policy that pushed the EU to the forefront of the global climate protection or energy efficiency objectives (at least before the financial crisis) can

actually be linked to the growing environmental consciousness in Europe that is heavily supported by advanced and precise regulation. It is still to be explored to which extent these strategic moves and policy making processes have been influenced by Green parties, but they certainly did play an important role in attracting and gaining public support for policies that generate a positive environmental impact.⁴⁰ The most recent decision in Germany to phase out nuclear power plants, triggered by the Fukushima disaster, although limited to the boundaries of the German Republic, has evidently been a result of a long struggle led by Greens Europe-wide.⁴¹ Moreover, great impetus for greening the European economy was actually initiated by some of the Greens policy proposals (A Green New Deal for Europe) that aimed to design solutions for the economic crisis coupling ecological modernisation with economic benefits.⁴² Therefore, the green footprint in the EU decisions is more traceable and more visible leading us to the conclusion that Greens play an active role in ensuring the highest democratic and environmental standards, pushing hardly the EU to become and stay a global frontrunner in this field. Having these values at high stake at this moment due to multiple crises, these developments appear to bring new challenges for the Greens and their future.

However, at this very moment, core competences of both the EGP and leading national party structures reside deeply in the sphere of European integration and common future of the European Union. Interpreted as inherently European and transnational, they directly opt for the creation of a much more democratised United States of Europe. Accordingly, any major crisis in the sphere of European integration can produce detrimental impacts on the trajectory of Green political parties; as their programs are evidently pro-European, even appearing as such in national parliaments' campaigns with a 'more Europe' narrative. It is yet to be explored if a crisis that would regressively push the EU back to nationalism and protectionism, and ignore the cosmopolitan, transnational future of the EU that is intertwined with the concept of transnational citizenship, would affect the majority of green national political agendas Europe-wide leaving less space for their performances at the EU level.

4. Conclusion

The intention of this article was to pose some of the most challenging questions for the future trajectory of Green parties in Europe. With this objective we highlighted only two aspects that seem relevant for further development and change. Firstly, we addressed the role of EU membership when assessing the success of Green parties in Europe and very sharp differences between the well established Western European countries from the core, Western European Mediterranean countries at the periphery and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Secondly, we concentrated our attention on the multifold relationship between the Europeanization process and EU integration itself and the impacts it has on the development of Green parties in Europe.

In this exercise we have found out that EU membership does not play a significant role in defining the success and performances of Green parties in terms of their parliamentary representation. In addition to that, we have tracked some evidences that bottom up development of the parties and successes at the regional and national level usually precedes their appearance in EU politics. However, the article also brings findings which show that some common socio-economic factors determine the performances and potential success of Green parties across Europe. These factors still need to be explored in their complexity and in reference to respective interests (electoral law, constituencies, maturity of democracy...). It seems that these differences originate not only from diverse cultural, religious or economic backgrounds, they also refer to the duration and the changes that occurred in the political developments in the respective European regions. At first glance, although we recognise more complex relationships, when assessing performances of Green parties in Europe we can easily divide Europe in three parts – core Western European states that demonstrate visible success and increase in the last decade, then a very unstable and fragile picture with Green parties in the Mediterranean countries at the periphery, and last, Central and Eastern Europe where Greens still do not succeed to assure a permanent presence in political life and develop their distinctive style of new politics. Yet, divergences that emerge between European West, South and East prove to be an extremely rich ground for further exploration of the future of Greens in Europe.

In the second part, the article concludes that the future of the Greens still depends more on the future of the European Union than it is the opposite.⁴³ In relation to their capacity and strength to adapt and to extend their voter base, Greens have demonstrated flexibility, and learned how to communicate to other, so far unusual audiences. In the next decades Greens could become a new sort of mainstream party with a large voter base. They are now able to embrace in an easier way a significant portion of the population that was influenced by their messages during last decades (protest voters in the 1980s and 1990s are now a stable Green electorate). That is also possible due to the fact that many of the Greens' demands and proposals have been realised and incorporated at the European policy level, thus bringing them closer to the political mainstream.⁴⁴ These achievements can be capitalised in a way that governance at the EU level proves to be more effective for the issues relevant for Greens and their voters. In this regard, exposure to the implementation of EU policies does not necessarily open new opportunities for Greens. It is rather about challenges. This implies that Greens Europe-wide, and particularly those in the EU, are most likely willing to defend this success, even potentially confronting with new political subjects that aim to challenge their positions – such as Leftists or soon even Pirates. Common policy packages in the areas of concern (transport, agriculture, energy etc.), more dense cooperation and solidarity between member countries, common citizenship – these are all green objectives which are closely linked with the survival of the EU and its deeper integration.

The Greens trajectory will largely depend upon the answers formulated to solve the current crisis. In case that European integration is upgraded to the next level it might be the opportunity for the next step of institutionalisation of Green parties at the EU level, where transnational form of political organisation would explicitly and directly be involved in the political battles in the EP or other EU institutions.

Briefly, although they are still not among the most important and powerful parties in most of the European countries, Greens relate to the European project as their own (including failures and mistakes that occurred along the way) – or at least perceive a great amount of their own effort in ownership – even if they protested or confronted it. The fall and collapse of this project that still needs to be improved would also lead to the defeat of the values that have been advocated and promoted by Green political parties Europe-wide. Last but not least, the strong and important pivotal role of Greens both in Germany (with longer tradition) and in France (with recent success of Europe Ecologie), backed up by visible increase in some of the EU countries (Austria, Finland, Hungary) shows that in the near future Greens might play a crucial role in defining Europe's future decisions and image. To that question there is no unique answer. Answers also largely depend on their programmatic orientation⁴⁵, capacity for innovation and adaptation: Europe-wide Greens might hold the distinction of a unique party family with a focus on 'new politics' but at the same time a close relationship with their electorate.⁴⁶

NOTES

¹ Just to illustrate the continuity, Greens in Finland are still in the government; among others they hold the position of Minister for International Development and ownership steering issues through Heidi Hautala, who was the leader of the Finish Green Party, MEP and a presidential candidate. See more: <http://www.heidihahtala.fi/front-page/?lang=en>

² Website of Latvian Green party <http://www.zp.lv/>

³ Paul Hockenos, *Joschka Fischer and the Making of the Berlin Republic*, Oxford University Press, 2007.

⁴ BBC. (2011). Greens celebrate Merkel Defeat, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-12880732>, and Lau, M. (2011). Moses aus Sigmaringen, <http://www.zeit.de/2011/13/Kretschmann/seite-2>

⁵ Term that was coined by Rudi Dutschke, one of the most prominent spokespersons of the German student movement in the 1960's.

⁶ Results of Europe Ecologie in France for European Parliament elections in 2009 or last election results of Die Grünen/Bündnis 90 in Berlin or Baden Württemberg in 2011 demonstrate that Greens have reached stable 15-20% of votes that certainly separates them from the initial image of an anti-party party or so-called junior-partners.

⁷ See in Green New Deal at <http://europeangreens.eu/green-newdeal/>

⁸ For example some Green MEPs form the Spinelli Group that strives for the federalisation of Europe and bringing in 'more democracy'. See more in Euractiv.com. (2011). Federalists want "people agora" to decide EU future, <http://www.euractiv.com/future-eu/federalists-want-people-agora-decide-eu-future-news-509583>.

⁹ Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds in Catalonia governed Catalonia as part of a tripartite coalition in the period 2004-2010. In the 2009 European Parliament elections, Michalis Tremopoulos was elected as the first Greek Green MEP.

¹⁰ In parliamentary elections in 1990 Greens in Slovenia gained 9%.

¹¹ For example: Salzmann, M. and Henning, D. (2006). Czech Greens enter right-wing government, <http://www.wsfs.org/articles/2006/jun2006/czec-j19.shtml> <http://www.wsfs.org/articles/2006/jun2006/czec-j19.shtml>. Also, the success of Estonian Greens in 2007 and Hungarian LMP in 2010 can be found in the election reports.

¹² Bomberg, E. (2002). The Europeanisation of Green Parties: Exploring the EU's Impact, *West European Politics*, 25 (3): 29 - 50.

¹³ Needless to note, environmental issues (like pollution, climate change, etc.) are transboundary issues, but in the same category of 'high attention' for Greens are also issues like migration or citizenship, or those that relate to values like gender equity, etc.

¹⁴ The establishment of the European Green Party in February 2004 marked an important milestone for the green movement. With their common European Parliament election campaign in 2004, they entered new political territory. See more "Green Identity in a Changing Europe", Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2008.

¹⁵ Dietz, T. M. (2000). Similar But Different?: The European Greens Compared to Other Transnational Party Federations in Europe. *Party Politics* 6 (2): 199 - 210

¹⁶ According to the website of the European Green Party (www.europeangreens.eu)

¹⁷ *Women in the European Parliament*. (2011). Equality and Diversity Unit, Brussels: Directorate-General for Personnel.

¹⁸ Members of the 6th term of the European Parliament that are affiliated with the group "The Greens/European Free Alliance" can be seen on the website of the European Parliament. [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://europarl.europa.eu)

¹⁹ These countries include: the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania.

²⁰ Wallerstein, I. (2004). World-Systems Analysis. In: *World System History: Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems*, edited by George Modelski. Oxford: UNESCO/EOLSS Publishers.

²¹ Raschke, J. (2001). *Die Zukunft der Grünen*, Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag

²² Brinkerhoff, D. (1999). Exploring State–Civil Society Collaboration, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 28: 59–86.

²³ Doherty, B. (1992). The Fundi-Realo Controversy: An Analysis of Four European Green Parties, *Environmental Politics* 1(1): 94–120. Also see: Lees, C. (2000). *The Red–Green Coalition in Germany: Politics, Personalities and Power*. New York: Manchester University Press or Kitschelt, H. (1988). Left-Libertarian Parties: Explaining Innovation in the Competitive Party System, *World Politics* 40: 194–234.

²⁴ Ferrara, F. and Weishaupt J. M. (2004.). Get Your Act Together: Party Performance in European Parliament Elections, *European Union Politics* 5 (3): 283 – 306.

²⁵ Mair, P. (2001). The Green Challenge and Political Competition: How Typical is the German Experience? *German Politics* 10 (2): 99–116 and Rüdig, W. (2001). The Electoral Effects of Green Government Participation: A Comparative Analysis, paper presented at the Workshop on Greens in Power: Government Formation, Policy Impact, and the Future of Green Parties, ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Grenoble, 6–11 April 2001.

²⁶ Beyond the long history of disputes over the term of Europeanization which will not be part of this article, Europeanization is used 'as a shorthand term for a complex process whereby national actors (in this case, parties) adapt to, but also seek to shape the trajectory of European integration in general, and the EU policies and processes in particular' (Bomberg, 2002: 32). Europeanization is thus an interactive phenomenon that captures the dynamics of the relationship between Greens and European integration.

²⁷ Bomberg, E. (2002). The Europeanization of Green Parties: Exploring the EU's Impact, *West European Politics*, 25 (3): 29 - 50.

²⁸ Bomberg, E. (2002). The Europeanization of Green Parties: Exploring the EU's Impact, *West European Politics*, 25 (3): 29 - 50.

²⁹ In our point of view, the emergence of the new political parties that claim the label of 'new politics' like LMP from Hungary (2008) or Palikot Movement from Poland (2011) in Eastern Europe provides food for thought and calls for further comparative research of these two historically separated processes.

³⁰ Charter of European Greens "From these origins, European Greens have come together to form our own political family.

We stand for a free, democratic and social Europe in a peaceful, equitable and environmentally sustainable world. We defend values like justice, human and citizen's rights, solidarity, sustainability and the right of each individual to lead their own lives, free from fear."

³¹ Dietz, T. M. (2000). Similar but Different?: The European Greens Compared to Other Transnational Party Federations in Europe, *Party Politics* 6 (2): 199 – 210. "By the end of 1998 transnational party cooperation among the greens had not really shown the true characteristics of a European party, since there had been no real transfer of national sovereignty to the European level. Nevertheless, during the previous 18 years, the Greens were able to establish transnational cooperative structures similar to those of other transnational party federations, although they remain different as far as some organizational features (lack of an EU party federation and a party leaders' meeting) are concerned. It is worth stressing, however, that the Greens have managed to do this without the help of other transnational structures of party cooperation, such as a parliamentary group in the European Parliament (at least at the beginning) or a green International, and despite facing additional financial and ideological constraints compared to other party families in Europe."

³² Although they share most of the common values related to the EU, there are some differences in projections of the future of the EU. See: Bomberg, E. (2002). The German Greens thus proclaim 'a resounding yes to Europe' and call for an 'intensification and expansion of European integration' in their most recent national party platform. The Finns, whilst less enthusiastic, nonetheless concede a role for EU action because 'the global market needs a counterbalancing framework of regulation and minimum standards larger than the nation-state'. And British and Swedish Greens, whilst wary of an 'EU superstate', insist that co-operation across borders is both 'desirable and necessary, particularly on environmental issues, human rights, cultural developments, disarmament and peace'.

³³ www.europeangreens.eu – "Our attitude towards the EU has changed also perhaps as we have changed the EU through our participation in its institutions. While we remain critical of various policies fundamental to the EU, we have been drivers of change punching far above our weight and bringing about change in the daily lives of Europeans everywhere as well as a change in the positions taken by the EU on an international level. We have always been a political force clearly identifiable because of our commitment to environmental responsibility, individual freedom, inclusive democracy, diversity, gender equality, global sustainable development and non-violence. It is not a negligible achievement that other, larger and older political families now follow on the path we had chosen for ourselves long before."

³⁴ Bomberg, E. (2002). The Europeanization of Green Parties: Exploring the EU's Impact, *West European Politics*, 25 (3): 29 - 50.

³⁵ Hines, E. H. (2003). The European Parliament and the Europeanization of the Green Parties, *Cultural Dynamics*, 15 (3): 307 - 325.

³⁶ See the example of Germany: The enormous changes in Green policy and party structure did, however, have consequences for their supporters: In the Bundestag elections of 2002 the former so-called "anti-party party" was able to garner support from parts of the electorate they had previously been unable to reach. Their consumer and child policies had given them the programme and profile of a dependable, reform orientated party capable of government. In this manner the Greens began to pick up support from the traditional, conservative urban middle class in the more affluent areas of Hamburg, Berlin

and Bremen. It was not that the Greens won over CDU voters but rather that they created their own voter base in these social circles. There were many groups in this social milieu, for example women between 18 and 44 years of age, who had had only minimum contact with the traditional middle class parties of CDU and FDP. Although it relates to national parliamentary elections this illustration reflects the structural change in the party that was closely interrelated with European agenda.

³⁷ Bomberg, E. (2002). The Europeanization of Green Parties: Exploring the EU's Impact, *West European Politics*, 25 (3): 29 - 50.

³⁸ Again see the case of German Greens. Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (2002): Die Zukunft ist grün. Grundsatzprogramm von Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, Berlin. By the 2002 manifesto, however, the party was clearly reconciled with the (environmental) and social market economy in a fashion some observers viewed as way beyond what was required and appeared neoliberal in economic, financial and social policy. Their new manifesto documented not only the Greens' experience of government but also their development since the beginning of the 1990s and their total adaptation to the needs of parliamentary democracy. Also see more: Rüdig, W. (2002). Germany, in: Müller-Romme, F. and Poguntke, T. (ed.). *Green Parties in National Governments*.

³⁹ Surveys show that the Green electorate is not reduced any more to the classical environmentalist audience but it already embraces the conservative and liberal spectrum.

⁴⁰ European Community Directives on environment also helped to increase the influence of Greens. See page 139 Robertson, D. and Rootes, C. (1995). *The Green Challenge*, London: Routledge.

⁴¹ One of the strongest factions of the Green party established in Germany was composed of the numerous action groups of the anti-nuclear movement.

⁴² See in http://www.europeangreens.eu/fileadmin/logos/pdf/manifesto_EUROPEAN_GREENS.pdf

⁴³ Bomberg, E. (2002). This study has illustrated how ideological adaptation – in the form of programmatic change – has been more fluid and less controversial than institutional change which, in the case of the Greens, has involved more dramatic shifts in the locus of decision making power away from the grassroots and towards central leadership.... Parties need not simply lie back and 'let Europe happen to them': they can (and often do) actively engage and exploit European structures for their own party political gain. This engagement is not always successful – in the case of the Greens it often backfired in the form of increased internal tension and strife. But national parties may hold far more potential than generally recognised to shape EU policies, structures and even integration.

⁴⁴ Bomberg, E. (2002). First it is more obvious: as a relatively new party family, Greens are less embedded in routine and tradition, more susceptible to change, including change brought about by EU structures and policies. Secondly, the effect on the Greens may be more profound: above all, Europeanization has accelerated both trends of 'professionalization' of Green strategy and the mellowing of their ideological edge.

⁴⁵ Ingolfur Blühldorn's evaluation of the German Greens: Re-inventing Green Politics: On the Strategic Repositioning of the German Green Party. In: *German Politics*, Issue 1/2009. Greens now need to deal with the situation that their post-materialist and libertarian policies were not viewed favourably by the majority of an unsettled society. The Greens' role can therefore be seen as both political and one in the avant-garde of lifestyle, able to foresee future problems and tackle them more

efficiently than other parties. If they succeed in meeting this challenge in either a red-(red-) green or a black-(yellow-)green governing coalition, as currently in Bremen and Hamburg, without tying themselves up in policy contradictions, the Greens will have justified their strategically important position in the German political system as the "party of reason" and "ideas factory for the future." In: *The German Greens: Past, Present and Future*, by Melanie Haas, Green Identity in a Changing Europe, Heinrich Böll Stiftung.

⁴⁶ Burchell, J. (2002). *The Evolution of Green politics: Development and Change within European Green Parties*. London: Earthscan publications. Green parties have been faced with the challenge of developing an effective political role through which to represent Green politics, within the competitive European party systems. In doing so, Green party evolution has centred upon a process of adaptation, based upon balancing the specific characteristics of what it means to be Green with the pressures faced by all small political parties who function within a competitive party-political environment.

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