

# EUROPEAN ELECTION MANIFESTO

A strong Europe - also for  
the next generations



radikale

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The European Union has now been a part of our lives for more than 50 years. We in Radikale Venstre are happy and proud of this. It has been 50 years benefitting Denmark.

However, we also celebrated the 50th anniversary against a gloomy backdrop and a new security situation. A new reality that has made it clear to everyone that security policy has many aspects and must be integrated and coordinated with efforts in areas such as energy, climate, migration, technology, development, industry and trade.

War is now back on the European continent. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shaken Europe. However, it has also brought Europe together. Member states stand side by side with Ukraine in the fight against Putin.

At the same time, the EU and the world are facing a climate crisis, with one scientific report after another setting off all alarms. Parts of the world are drying out. Parts of the world are flooding. Seas are rising and small islands are at risk of disappearing. Animal species go extinct and marine life disappears. Extreme weather conditions are becoming more and more common.

The climate crisis is the biggest challenge for our continent and the green transition should be the focal point for current and future European politicians. In the upcoming parliamentary term, we must ensure that legislation already adopted against climate change is also implemented – while we continue at the same time to raise the ambitions. We can still reach the goals of the Paris Agreement, but we need to act now!

On top of the security and climate crisis, we are also seeing pressure on fundamental rights, with freedom of speech and the right to abortion being challenged in many places. Moreover, as refugee and migration flows create renewed pressure on Europe's external borders, the Refugee Convention is often not respected.

The future may seem bleak, but we must also remember where and what we come from and what the EU has achieved for all of us.

The EU stands for and guarantees the fundamental rights of citizens. Rights based on the values of equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, human dignity, freedom and democracy. Freedom of expression. Freedom of religion. The right to privacy. The right to be protected from dismissal due to pregnancy and maternity.

Today, we have a single market in the EU where people, knowledge and goods can move freely across borders. A market with common rules and almost 500 million consumers. A continent where 17 million EU citizens work and live in another member states than their home country.

The EU has made it easier to study and conduct research across borders - to the benefit of European economies, research and students.

The EU has been in the forefront of green development and set ambitious climate targets. European climate action is the engine of global climate agreements. Many natural areas in Europe enjoy special protection because of our common rules.

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The EU has given children more time with both parents through earmarked parental leave. The right to equal pay for equal work was secured thanks to the EU. We can now use our mobile phones across the EU without paying extra for it.

The EU has created all of this. By decisions, we have made together. We must continue to build on them.

If we are to continue to have a strong European community, the EU must keep on fulfilling its responsibilities and show the way forward. Is the EU perfect? No, it is not. There are plenty of things that are not as they should be: We need to speed up the green transition so that the continent is free from fossil fuels. We need a better internal market for energy. We need to address asylum and migration issues so that southern Europeans are not left alone. We need to do a better job of cutting funds when member states violate fundamental rights. There are many things we can and must do better.

Nevertheless, the EU is still the guarantor of the development that will create a better and safer society for current and future generations - both in Denmark and in the rest of Europe. That is why it remains Radikale Venstre's ambition that Denmark should be a full and complete member of the EU. Therefore, we want to abolish the legal opt-out, which increasingly stands in the way of Denmark's interests and security. In this regard, we are pleased that we abolished the defence opt-out in 2022 and now fully participate in the common defence of Europe's security.

Europe is built on hope and the desire to pass on a better world to the next generation. We in Radikale Venstre share that hope. That hope is the spirit behind our election programme for the European Parliament elections 2024.

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## A GREEN, SUSTAINABLE AND INDEPENDENT EUROPE

Radikale Venstre wants to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent that inspires and promotes development in other countries and regions outside the EU. We want to create a society where we still have a high standard of living and not only preserve, but also strengthen our nature and increase biodiversity.

Therefore, we want to ensure that the climate-neutral and environmentally friendly choices are also the most attractive choices for consumers. This requires us to strengthen European co-operation and the use of economic and technological tools that can get us there - and to do it in a way that preserves our freedoms and social cohesion. We need to make sure that all Europeans are part of the green transition and that no one is left behind without job opportunities and purchasing power.

### Radikale Venstre believes that;

- The climate plan for carbon neutrality must be more ambitious
  - The greenhouse gas reduction target must be increased to 65% by 2030 and the EU must be climate neutral by 2040. Interim targets and binding requirements must be set for reductions until 2035. To make the path to this goal visible for citizens, businesses and member states, the climate plan must also include a roadmap on how to phase out climate-damaging production in favour of a sustainable alternative where possible;
  - The pan-European climate requirements must be considered as minimum requirements and must not stand in the way of member states having more ambitious climate legislation;
  - We must create a central European climate accounting model to keep track of the total climate impact throughout the EU. This will create cross-border climate initiatives and strengthen the internal market for co-operation on CO<sub>2</sub>-reducing measures;
  - The economic drivers of the EU's climate policy must be a carbon cap and a well-functioning quota system with a high price on greenhouse gas emissions covering all sectors;
  - EU countries must deliver on their part of the COP-15 pledge to provide \$100bn in climate finance to the world's poorest countries and take the lead in financing the fund for climate-related loss and damage decided at COP-27. The support must be new and additional and therefore not taken from existing humanitarian, development or climate-related budgets.
- The energy supply must be green, cheap and flow across borders throughout the EU:
  - The expansion of the EU's energy systems, including the electricity grid, must be organised between the member states, so that individual suppliers or countries cannot manipulate prices or supply;

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- The EU must remove national obstacles in the electricity market for the benefit of consumers through a better framework and finances for the expansion of green energy. This must be done without unnecessary red tape, but with respect for citizens' involvement;
  - We need to de-bureaucratise the approval process for green projects. While an approval takes 6 months in the US, it often takes years in the EU. We must do better;
  - Energy supply must be based on CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral sources and be as cheap as possible;
  - The production of CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral energy sources such as wind turbines, solar cells and nuclear power must be circular, so that they are produced with either neutral or positive effects on nature;
  - Energy efficiency, district heating and cooling must play a central role in the fight to become independent of fossil fuels in our buildings. Denmark's experience with the utilisation of waste heat, geothermal energy, energy storage and energy efficiency, as well as the establishment of district heating infrastructure, will contribute to the EU's decarbonisation and strategic autonomy and security of energy supply;
  - An EU-wide market and infrastructure for the transport, storage and use of CO<sub>2</sub> and hydrogen must be established.
- Transport must be based on electricity or CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral fuels:
    - Train operations have to be improved and coordinated at a European level. There must be direct connections between major European cities with high-speed and night trains and, as far as possible, common signalling programmes;
    - Air and sea transport must be subject to a climate tax as soon as possible and must transition to sustainable fuels and green power. The goal is to become the first continent to be served solely by aeroplanes using fossil-free fuels and green power.

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## A EUROPE THAT CARES FOR NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The world is not only facing a climate crisis. We are also in the midst of a nature and biodiversity crisis. Fortunately, nature in Europe has benefited greatly from EU legislation for many years, and we in Radikale Venstre therefore see common legislation as an important tool for preserving and restoring nature and biodiversity. We will therefore work to strengthen co-operation - and for Denmark to take the lead and raise the ambitions for Europe's nature and biodiversity.

In the EU, we have high standards for both our environment and for consumer products. The EU sets the standard for production globally. We must continue to ensure and expand these high standards. This also requires us to be better at taking action when new legislation is adopted - for example, a ban on PFASs must not only be adopted, but also implemented quickly and efficiently.

Agriculture accounts for a large part of the climate impact in Europe. We must therefore transform and reorganise agriculture in the EU, so European agriculture becomes a true global green frontrunner. This requires, among other things, less production and consumption of animal products if these cannot be replaced by sustainable alternatives.

### **Radikale Venstre believes that;**

- We must create a European circular economy where resources are recycled as much as possible and alternatively incinerated in efficient combustion plants that capture CO<sub>2</sub> instead of emitting greenhouse gases;
- The supply of critical raw materials such as lithium, nickel and silicon should increasingly come from either the EU or our allies. This will create strategic independence from major powers such as China – and should be done even if this is more expensive in the short term;
- We must continue to have high environmental standards for goods sold in the EU. The precautionary principle must continue to be the basis for EU legislation, and bans on harmful substances have to be adopted and implemented faster than today;
- The climate impact of food products must be reflected in the final price and agricultural subsidies must be reformed in order for poorer countries to have real access to European markets and compete with European producer;
- Nature has intrinsic value and therefore the right to be protected. More resources must be used to ensure that the EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030 has a real impact - including the creation of genuinely protected areas corresponding to at least 30 per cent of the EU's land and sea areas, of these 10 per cent must be strictly protected, and we should expand existing Natura 2000 areas;

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- More trees and natural reforestation should be planted in the EU, both by increasing forest areas to create more wild nature and by promoting the development of sustainable timber construction. This can be done by enabling institutional investors to invest in forests and by facilitating the conversion of agricultural land to forest;
  - The EU should establish a climate adaptation fund and climate adaptation unit. Funds should be spent on ensuring critical infrastructure and climate adaptation. The climate adaptation unit will identify EU legislation that stands in the way of climate adaptation in member states and across the Union.

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## A DEMOCRATIC AND FREE EUROPE

The EU should continue to be characterised by being a liberal democracy and by having high standards for rule of law and human rights, including minority and women's rights. By having freedom of speech and media independence.

Recently, a worrying conservative wave is sweeping across Europe. A wave that poses a threat to the core values of the EU. In member states such as Poland and Hungary, fundamental rights for refugees, migrants and LGBT+ people are under attack. Basic rule of law and freedoms are eroded by reforms in Romania, Croatia and Slovakia. Women's right to decide over their own bodies is under worrying attack in many places, and in countries like Malta and Poland, the right to abortion is non-existent or extremely restricted.

This development challenges the values the EU is founded upon. Therefore, the EU have to develop and use tools that effectively prevent and sanction violations of the rule of law and fundamental rights in the member states.

The EU must also be a leader in the global fight for freedom, rule of law and democracy. However, unfortunately, the unity in foreign and security policy is challenged by the fact that some countries use or threaten to use their veto power. As a result we have to reform the common set of rules and for reflect on how we can use the lessons learnt from the latest major enlargement of the EU. Countries such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova and their people want to join the European family. They must have our help and support to anchor democratic values before joining. The countries must be welcomed into our community in a way so both sides can keep up and offer each other the necessary community of values and security.

### **Radikale Venstre believes that;**

- The Commission must take much tougher action against member states that do not comply or violate EU legislation. This can be done both through legal proceedings and sanctions, and by - to a greater extent - criticising member states openly that repeatedly break EU rules;
- EU-funds must be cut when there are violations of, for example, LGBT+ people's and women's rights or when the independence of the judiciary is compromised. The so-called rule of law mechanism must be strengthened so that there is an increasing link between violations of the EU's fundamental rights and financial consequences for member states that disrespects our common values;
- The right to decide over one's own body in the form of, among other things, the right to abortion, contraception and sex education must be emphasised as a fundamental value in the EU;
- The EU must strengthen the powers of national courts and the European Court of Justice to take action against hate crimes;



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- Countries applying to join the EU (candidate countries) must adhere to the EU's core values and have a strong democratic civil society and independent judicial system before becoming members. At the same time, the process of becoming a member state must be actively supported - for example, by allowing countries such as Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia to gradually join the EU as they make progress in key areas such as anti-corruption, judicial independence and freedom of the press;
  - The EU must strengthen its cooperation with civil society organisations and advocacy groups both in candidate countries and in other neighbouring regions;
  - The EU must work towards greater flexibility in foreign policy by considering when and how the right of veto can be limited. This will ensure that the EU's unity is not weakened due to the special interests of individual states, e.g. in relation to Russia. However, in the defence area, the right of veto should be maintained.

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## A EUROPE THAT TAKES RESPONSIBILITY GLOBALLY

In a volatile global era where rules, norms and institutions are changing and are under pressure, both externally and internally, it is crucial that the EU acts principled and long-term in its refugee- and migration policy. The EU must ensure a proper and controlled asylum processing at its external borders. The EU must also guarantee a reasonable distribution of refugees among member states and ensure fair treatment and integration of refugees in the member states.

We are starting to see increasing pressure on the EU's external borders. The EU's neighbourhood is increasingly destabilised by war, conflict and human suffering. Russia's war against Ukraine has cruelly exposed a new world order and forced millions to flee. Drought and natural disasters have displaced millions in the Horn of Africa and Pakistan. Instability in North Africa and the Sahel region is driving more and more people northwards in the hope of living in freedom and security.

The EU has both a responsibility and an interest in ensuring better living conditions and contributing to conflict resolution and humanitarian protection in our neighbourhood. The EU must therefore be at the global forefront of robust and principled development aid and humanitarian efforts.

The EU must be a driving force behind a global, rules-based world order. Russia and China will use every opportunity to strengthen their own interests in the EU's eastern neighbourhood as well as in the global south, where many - partly justified - have begun to doubt whether the West can and will actually deliver the promised and necessary aid for humanitarian disasters and for combating and adapting to climate change, which is already a reality in several places.

The defence of Ukraine is the defence of the right to national self-determination, and this battle must be won. The EU's support for Ukraine must be maintained. At the same time, it is necessary for the EU to become even more involved in other neighbouring regions where the fight for freedom also risks turning from cold to hot wars and where the need for European solidarity and support is clearly present. Here, Europe has a responsibility and a security interest in supporting democracy and civil society and fighting poverty by promoting basic needs such as education, health and clean drinking water.

### **Radikale Venstre believes that;**

- The financial support to Ukraine should be considered as extraordinary support. The EU must also allocate more common funds for humanitarian aid to the world's poorest and most vulnerable;
- The EU must provide financial and diplomatic support to civil society and to defenders of the rule of law, human rights and democracy in the EU's neighbourhood;
- The EU must work to strengthened partnerships with developing countries based on equality and dialogue on common interests, including on green transition, trade and legal migration;

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- The negotiations for a European Asylum and Migration Pact must lead to a model where strengthened external border controls go hand in hand with a common European distribution and solidarity mechanism, so that EU countries fulfil their asylum law obligations as a group;
  - Separate monitoring of both Frontex operations and the individual member states' border control and asylum processing must be established to ensure compliance with the Refugee Convention;
  - The EU must use its co-operation to denounce illegal occupations and promote the rights of oppressed minorities, including in the West Bank and Western Sahara.

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## AN ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE EUROPE

The single market and the free movement of goods and services across EU borders have created wealth and prosperity in all member states, but the potential of the single market is even greater. To realise this potential, EU competition rules need to be more uniformly implemented and enforced in the member states. There is also a need for labour to be able to move even more freely in Europe. Workers from other EU countries should be able to work in Denmark without having to take unnecessary tests and fulfil meaningless requirements.

Europe's economy is generally well-functioning and resilient. However, there are still a number of areas where the EU needs to be better prepared for the future. This is especially true for energy security and critical products such as microchips and vaccines. The same goes for ensuring a skilled labour force and fair conditions for workers. It is true when it comes to free competition and high consumer safety. And it's true when it comes to creating ethical standards for digitalisation and environmental responsibility.

In balancing all these considerations, it is crucial that the EU does not close in on itself in the desire to ensure strategic autonomy. The Union must balance a number of difficult and sometimes conflicting considerations without unnecessary delay and bureaucracy in finding solutions.

### **Radikale Venstre believes that;**

- The EU must trade with as many countries as possible and pursue a progressive trade policy, for example with the Mercosur countries in South America, Australia and India;
- The fear of further inflation must not lead the EU to follow the American approach to "solving" problems. The EU must remain open, avoid economic protectionism and exercise great caution with state aid;
- The EU must focus more on the quality of the legislation that is adopted and on ensuring that it works in practice. In some areas, it is therefore necessary to slow down the pace of new legislation - and in return increase the sanctions when the rules are not respected or legislation is not implemented;
- Confidence in responsible economic policies of EU countries must be created by tightening the requirements for member states to comply with the requirements of the Stability and Growth Pact. Flexibility is needed, but it must be accompanied by requirements for reforms to reduce deficits and national debt;
- The EU must promote an even more mobile and flexible labour force in the single market. The EU must combat bottlenecks - among other things through more uniform enforcement of competition rules, greater focus on the recognition of educational qualifications and more accessible continuing education and training;

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- It must be easier for non-EU workers to obtain a work permit in the EU. This will strengthen the economy and give some of the people who currently reside in Europe as illegal workers a legal way into the European labour market;
  - It is positive and necessary that the EU strengthens its focus on equal pay and equality in the labour market - and that discrimination against women, seniors and minorities in the labour market must be highlighted and prevented to a greater extent than today;
  - Decent working conditions for Europeans must be ensured through the Minimum Wage Directive and the Pay Transparency Directive - which at the same time allow for local ways of solving the challenge of wage dumping and unequal pay;
  - Support for research and development in the EU must be increased and prioritised with a focus on health promotion, green transition, infrastructure and technology;
  - The EU must be a global engine for responsible digitalisation and regulation of the tech industry and put citizens' rights first.
  - The EU must invest in a digital ombudsman to hold tech giants accountable for the way they do business and for the content on their platforms. Among other things, it must be visible to the consumer who is responsible for the content they encounter on the platforms and how the company uses targeted advertising and artificial intelligence;
  - The EU must ensure that new technology, including artificial intelligence, does not undermine human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Therefore, a ban must be introduced on the use of biometric surveillance such as facial recognition and on using artificial intelligence to discriminate;
  - Net neutrality must be maintained and promoted and the EU must crack down on geo-blocking to ensure a single market also in the digital space.

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