



, 30.09.2008

European Greens congratulate Austrian Greens for standing up to far right in General Election Campaign

The **European Green Party** has said that the results of the Austrian General Elections, in particular the high number of votes for 2 far right parties, are due in great measure to the failings of the former governing parties, the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the Conservatives (ÖVP).

EGP Co-Spokesperson Philippe Lamberts said : " This election was unfortunately dominated by negative campaigning and a lot of scaremongering, not only by the populist rightwing parties, the FPÖ and BZÖ, but also by the Conservatives and the Social Democrats who played straight into the hands of those far right parties by focussing so much of their attention on competing with them on their key issues of foreign migrants , in the case of the conservatives, and on mistrust of the EU, in the case of the Social Democrats. Many voters used their vote as a protest against the governing parties because of their failure to propose any solutions, let alone long-term ones, to the key challenges facing Austria such as education, the cost of living and high energy prices, the integration of migrants and gender inequality. This is why the two former governing parties must bear a considerable part of the responsibility for the electoral success of the far right parties. **The Austrian Greens(Die Grünen)** can proudly say that they were the party who stood up to the populist rightwing parties and offered the voters positive policies regarding issues like the energy crisis and the widening gap between rich and poor. Although we, like the Austrian Greens, are disappointed that they were not able to increase their vote and number of parliamentary seats, the fact that their vote, once all the postal votes have been counted, is likely to be similar to their result in 2006, if a little lower, is a real achievement when seen in the context of an extremely vicious election campaign."

Philippe Lamberts continued: "The result of this election is in many ways disappointing, and the rise of the far right will be of deep concern not only to all those people in Austria who are committed to the values of tolerance and respect for diversity and pluralism, but also to those of us in the rest of Europe who realise that the far right in Europe poses a real threat to our democracy and to our social harmony. However, I would like to warmly congratulate the Austrian Greens for bravely putting the case for a

Press release

The Greens | EFA
in the European Parliament



just and humane policy on migrants and refugees and a more equitable distribution of wealth in an extremely hostile atmosphere. Greens all over Europe are confident that the Austrian Greens will continue their work in Parliament to further the green agenda of environmental protection, combatting climate change, facilitating sustainable economic growth and promoting social justice and equal opportunities."
