

**GPUS STRATEGIC PLAN 2013
REPORT
INTERNATIONAL GREEN PARTIES**

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Greens in Countries With Proportional Rep vs. Winner-Take-All

In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of Green Parties in the developed world gained between 5 and 10% of the vote.

Where proportional representation systems prevailed, such percentages got Greens elected to office, even to participation in coalition governments. For example, in 1998 the German Greens got 6.7% of the vote for their equivalent of the House of Representatives, and this got them 47 MP's out of 669. They were the third biggest party and joined the government, with Joska Fisher as minister of foreign affairs.

Where first-past-the-post (winner-take-all) systems prevail, you have to be first in any given district, which even in a race with three or more parties can mean a threshold of 40% or more to get elected. For example, in 2008 the Canadian Greens got the same 6.7% of the vote, but it got them nothing: no seats in Parliament, and certainly no participation in government.

The systemic barriers to getting elected at this level of support, along with certain characteristics of internal party organizations and Green culture, created these effects in Canada:

- The party couldn't get taken seriously by media or thought leaders
- The party attracted more activist types than people looking for a career in politics
- The party focused internal discussions more on process than on political content
- Federal elections were a patchwork of local initiatives, rather than a national campaign that locals took part in
- Party leadership focused on creating limited cohesion and supporting local groups

How Canada Beat The System

The Canadian Green Party won its first seat in parliament in May 2011, 30 years after the Green Party in Belgium did the same.

Expansive Platform Outreach

In 2004, the Canadian party used a wiki tool, called a “Living Platform,” to develop their election platform. At that time they only had about 800 members. They invited the public to weigh in, and they received feedback from 80,000 supporters. This boosted public visibility and engaged tens of thousands of new people, and got the party enough votes to begin qualifying for public financing.

Targeting Races and Resources

In 2011 Canada targeted one district. They created the environment in which Elizabeth May could win by choosing that district two years before, based on research. The Party invested heavily in the district – for example, they opened an office there a year and a half before the election.

Elizabeth May was a staff member before becoming the party leader. She was paid full time so she could spend all her time in the district. She spent 3 of 4 weeks before the election in the district.

In 2004 the Canadian party’s budget was not much larger than the levels that GPUS has reached. Seven years later, they reached their current annual budget of nearly \$3 million, \$1.7 million coming from individual donors.

Policy Development

General thoughts on policy development:

- Solid policy is a strong base from which to reach out to voters
- A party should be represented by policies as well as candidates or leaders
- It takes time to do it right
- Party members and the public should have an easy and meaningful way to participate
- Important to set a strategic focus, as well as have a wide-ranging group of policies

Danger of Losing Leader Position

The Green Party can lose their leading position on an issue when the competition takes it up.

- In Belgium, the Social Democrats claimed it was better to support them on the environment because they were almost always in government, while advocating the same agenda as the Greens. The government formed in 2003, after the Greens lost all their federal MPs, was named the most green govt in Belgian history.

Particularly when a Green Party enters government, their policy structure has to change to be able to respond faster to ongoing political debates.

Greens around the world, including in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, have gone beyond the “enviro” image

- They have won elections with the “Green New Deal”
- German Greens have invested substantial resources in building a “green economy” platform, which led to the first opportunity for them to lead a state government in Baden-Wurttemberg

Policy Decision-making In Various Countries

Here is a fairly detailed comparison of policy making in Belgium and Canada, followed by some charts that compare how things are done in other countries as well.

Belgium

In Belgium decision-making is pretty decentralized. They have 3 policy tracks:

- Basic issue programs
- Election programs
- Day to day positioning

Basic issue programs (platform sections):

The National Executive (similar to SC) decide which issues will become Congress [in person member meeting] agenda, and which will be handled by the Political Council (similar to NC). Both use a similar process.

- The Study Department (policy staff) will draft a white paper on the issue.

- The SD will also write specific motions for the Congress to approve and/or amend.
- The Political Council approves the motions, then they are sent to local groups who can propose amendments.
- The SD collects the amendments, and puts them into one of two buckets: Accepted changes (including typos and the like), and changes that warrant discussion and a vote.
- Before a Congress is held on the issue, the SD tries to reach consensus with the amendment proposers to combine amendments, and limit the number that need to be voted on.
- Finally the Congress with discuss and vote on the motions and amendments.

Election Programs

- The Political Council votes on the motion.
- The National Executive will create a program commission, which sets the frame for the election program. It is a job of covering the most important aspects of the current political agenda, and the need for a strategic focus that fits the campaign plan.
- The SD writes a draft election program, with heavy involvement from the party leader, who represents the focus of the election campaign.
- There are two items, the election program (detailed policy proposals) and the election platform (short form, highlights the priorities for the current campaign). Both are developed by the National Executive and the party leader.

Day-to-day positioning

- Responsibility of the party leader and the national executive
- Weekly discussions
- The party leader with the help of the media team and the parliamentary groups (elected officials), propose the scope of political communications for the next week to the National Executive
- The weekly meeting evaluates the past week and accepts the next week's communication strategy

Canada

Has a two pronged process for developing policy.

CONGRESS

- The party develops a platform (called policy book) through a similar process to Belgium's, except that there is no Study Group drafting white papers. Members develop motions, and submit them to votes by the whole membership. Those motions that did well in the membership vote are submitted in a block at the Congress (member meeting, no delegates or proxies) to be voted up or down. Not many members participate in this process, though it is open to all. Results in a document that is inconsistent in style, focus, etc.
- All Canadian parties provide a "parallel budget proposal" that shows how they would spend the federal budget.

LEADER

- The party leader determines the election platform (strategic selected summary of positions and actions MPs would take if elected). It is called "Vision Green."
- She appoints "shadow cabinet" to consult.
- She stays as party leader as long as the party gives her 60% approval after federal elections every four years.
- Assumption that leader will not go against "policy book" – but the leader is not obliged to bring policy motions for legislation.

Overall Decision Making Structure

Country	MEMBER MEETING ¹	NATIONAL COMMITTEE ²	EXECUTIVE BOARD ³	PARTY LEADER ⁴	STAFF
Belgium	“Congress.” Highest authority, approve/amend party principles, program, political strategy and statutes.	“Political Council” – delegates from regional/local parties, elected officials, youth and seniors. Decides on political direction, election platform, and party budget and finances. The Party Leader, Parliamentary Group, and elected officials report to this group.	“Natl Executive: “Elected by the congress, by region. Not paid staff. Party governance, political strategy and election campaigns, short term political communication and positioning. Organizes Congress and sets the agenda.	“Party Leader/Deputy Leader” – Elected as a duo by the congress. Final responsibility for the political and organizational functioning of the party. First spokespersons. They propose a party secretary appointed by Exec Board – who has day to day responsibility for party mgmt including staff and HQ.	50-60 staff at national level, each region has at least 1 full time employee
Canada	Votes on platform. Has done “wiki” to involve large group of supporters in platform development.	Governing Council – 1 rep from each province. Monthly mtgs. Hires ED. Ctes: Campaign, Budget, International, etc. Cte leadership approved by Council.	6 members plus Party Leader. Not staff. Half are elected every year. Meets weekly, makes emergency decisions.	Writes strategic policy summary (Vision Green) in consultation with Shadow Cabinet.	ED -manages staff, signs contracts, prepares budget etc. Hired by Governing Council. 12 staff: 4-5 work in provinces. 2 FR, 3 media and database, 2 book-keeping, asst to leader.

¹ A “Member Meeting” is an assembly where any member who attends can vote. There are no “delegates.”

² A “National Committee” is like our GNC, with delegates from various party structures.

³ An “Executive Board” is like our Steering Committee, elected by a larger body and responsible for certain higher-level and/or day-to-day activities.

⁴ “Party leader” has no analogue in GPUS.

Country	MEMBER MEETING ⁵	NATIONAL COMMITTEE ⁶	EXECUTIVE BOARD ⁷	PARTY LEADER ⁸	STAFF
New Zealand	Annual General Meeting – Elects co-chairs of Party Exec and Policy Ctte	Party Executive & Policy Committees each have reps from the 9 provinces	“Three Petals” – Co-Chairs of each of Policy Ctte, Party Executive, and Caucus (Natl Electeds)	All six co-chairs of the three petals are spokespeople and can all issue press releases on their own	5 FTE staff plus the 6 co-chairs who are volunteers but are given an annual stipend
Libertarian Party (US)	National Convention held bi-annually (By-laws, platform, LNC, re-forming of regions, presidential nominations, and election of Judicial Committee)	National Committee (meets every 2-3 months, can overturn staff)	Executive Board consisting of leadership (chair, secy, treas), 5 at-large, plus 1 rep of each of 7 regions	Chair of Exec Board	3-4 staff
Netherlands	Congress meets annually	Board (handles administrative stuff); national elected are policy leaders.	Monthly meeting of the board plus co-chairs of each national delegation (Senate, MPs, MEPs)	Parliamentary Leader	12-15 FTE plus staff to elected paid for by govt (another 25)
UK	Party Conference (any of the 16,000 can vote, when they hit 20,000 members they will move to a delegate system)		National Executive	Formally elected Leader and Deputy Leader (gender balance)	A few
Germany	National Congress (800 people made up of delegates from county chapters)	Party Council (16 people) – coordinating body that coordinates the work of the Green group in German parliament, states.	National Executive (2 co-chairs, secretary general, treasurer, 2 at-large) runs day-to-day business – press work, management of party, financial dealings.	Two elected co-chairs (gender balance)	30-40 staff to party; national elected have another 200 staff

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Membership

Country	Definition	Dues	How Many
Canada	Someone (age 16 or over) who pays dues to the national party	\$10/year, \$25/3 years	12,000 members
New Zealand	Someone who pays dues to the national party	\$15/year	4,500 members
Libertarian Party (US)	Someone who pays dues to the national party (states have separate membership and dues)	\$25/year	15,000 members
Belgium	Someone who pays dues to the national party	€25/yr	5,000 members
Netherlands	Someone who pays dues to the national party	Varies based on income. €10/yr for low income; €200/yr average	20,000 members
UK	Someone who pays dues to the national party	£40/yr (lower for low income and students)	16,000 members
Germany	Party registration & member dues	1% of your net income. Avg is €10/mo	16,000 members

Relationship To States and Localities

Country	Reln to States	Reln to Localities	Notes
Canada	No direct relationship.	Local chapters of national party by federal district – Regional staff does candidate recruitment. Of 308 districts (like congressional districts) 108 have local chapters.	Provincial parties are separate. Natl sometimes mobilizes local members to help these parties.
New Zealand	9 Provinces have members on Party Exec and Policy Committees	No formal relationship.	Delegates to Annual General Meeting are selected by “electorate” akin to a congressional district
Libertarian (US)	None	None	
Belgium	National party is a federation of 15 regions	Regions are comprised of city and county councils which themselves might be comprised of even smaller locals (neighborhoods)	When someone joins, they get invited to participate in activities. Then they decide how they want to get involved: locally, specific issues, etc. All new members invited to attend “Summer university” (end of August) 600-1000 people attend
Netherlands	Loose relationship	Loose relationship	
UK	Loose relationship	Loose relationship	
Germany	State Council (about 100 delegates from states) meet twice a year	Delegates from county chapters make up national congress	

Elected Officials

Country	Total Electeds	Federal Elected	State/Local	Notes
Canada	1	1 – Eliz. May	No state electeds. 10 Greens at muni level, but nonpartisan.	2 former deputy leaders, among other national party figures, are now in city council positions.
New Zealand		14 out of 120		
Libertarian Party (US)	136	0		
Belgium	600	8 MPs, 2 MEPs	4 regional administrators (governors), majorities in 2 regional legislatures	
Netherlands	hundreds	4 MPs, 3 MEPs, 5 in Senate	Various among 12 provinces	
UK	150 at different levels	1 MP		Took over Brighton City Council (same place as where the 1 MP comes from)
Germany	10,000 at all levels	68 MPs, 14 MEPs	At least 1 members of 16 state parliaments, in govt in many states	In one state, green governor/prime minister, many mayors (Stuttgart), and many county councils.

Finances and Funding

Country	Total Annual Revenue	Sources of Income	Notes
Canada	\$3 million	About 50/50 public funding and individuals.	Canada gives a tax break for political donations. The public funding is being phased out in 2015. 11-12,000 donors.
New Zealand	\$1.1 million	National electeds give tithe - ~\$150,000; membership dues; merchandise sales minimally; automatic payments – smaller sustainer donors; plus regular one-time donors	This does not include the public funding that goes to the Caucus (national elected)
Libertarian Party (US)	\$2-3 million	Mostly dues from national members and some larger donors plus regular appeals	
Belgium	\$5 million	Govt \$\$ for nationally elected caucus plus donations and dues. Nationally elected tithe themselves	Most of the \$5 million is govt subsidy. Maybe \$500,000 is raised from individual donors
Netherlands	unknown	Govt \$\$ for nationally elected caucus plus donations and dues. Nationally elected tithe themselves	
UK		Govt \$\$ for nationally elected caucus plus donations and dues. Nationally elected tithe themselves	The govt \$\$ is small because there is only 1 MP
Germany	Unknown 7 figures (at least \$1 million)	Govt \$\$ for nationally elected caucus plus donations and dues. Nationally elected tithe themselves	

List of Interviews

Johan Hamels – Green Party of Canada, previously Green Party of Belgium

Rick Leckinger – Green Party of New Zealand (Co-Chair of Policy Committee)

Tom Stevens – Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania (Chair)

Marakay Rogers – Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania (Chair of Judiciary Committee) & former Green)

Philippe Lamberts – Member of European Parliament from Belgium

Bas Eickhout – Member of European Parliament from the Netherlands

Jean Lambert – Member of European Parliament from the UK

Reinhart Butikofer – Co-spokesperson European Green Party, Former Co-Chair of German Green Party (2002-2008)

Other Thoughts

Many of the European Green Parties rely heavily on the money and staff their nationally elected MPs get.

Few parties have an equivalent of our National Committee. They all have very large annual groupings akin to our ANMs and an executive board equivalent to our Steering Committee with little in the middle – except for a committee structure similar to ours. In one case there is a bi-annual gathering of representatives from states.

Many of the parties share our same struggles with volunteer engagement, organization, and diversity.

New Zealand is the only country we interviewed whose political system moved from winner-take-all to proportional representation.