

Green parties to find their voice in domestic policies

French President Emmanuel Macron has pledged €15B in new funding to boost the country's green economy. The announcement on 29 June came a day after the Greens experienced strong success in local elections, taking control of major cities including Bordeaux, Lyon and Strasbourg. Macron said he would speed up environmentally friendly policymaking and was open to calling a referendum next year on revising the constitution to include climate targets.

The advance of the Greens in France follows a similar scenario in Ireland, where the country's Green Party has agreed to enter its governing coalition. Its inclusion was reportedly dependent on the government agreeing to a CO2 emissions reduction target of 7% per year.

It may sound far-fetched to suggest green parties could potentially be a uniting force among electorates that we're told are increasingly divided. There is, however, some evidence emerging to support this notion.

An article published in The Economist last week noted how "greencon" alliances are starting to appear in Northern Europe. In addition to Ireland, the

article points to Austria, where the populist People's Party rules in a coalition with the country's Green Party. The country's government is, as a result, simultaneously pursuing stricter immigration controls and environmental policies targeting carbon neutrality by 2040.

The article also tells readers to cast an eye to Germany, where an alliance between Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union and the Greens could be the outcome of next year's federal election.

Should such alliances be surprising? Policies aimed at supporting domestic businesses and limiting trade seemingly have appeal for both conservatives/populists (supporting domestic industry, keeping home interests central) and environmentalists (sourcing goods locally, reducing carbon footprints).

Green policies also seem popular with the general public. The French citizens' assembly, for example, recently lobbied President Macron to hold a referendum on whether intentionally harming nature should be a crime. In the UK, the citizens' assembly, comprised of 108 people drawn from all corners of society, recently urged the government to pursue an environmentally conscious recovery from COVID-19, and green technologies have long had the support of the UK public.

Whether "greencon" alliances have the strength to sustain remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that corporates should be prepared for environmentally focused politicians to increasingly have a say in law-making.

Nick Finegold is the Founder & CEO, Curation an emerging and peripheral risks monitoring service.

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