

# **Social Democracy in the 21st Century.**



**SPD**

**"The Bremen Draft" of a New Manifesto  
for the Social Democratic Party of Germany  
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## Preliminary remarks

The Executive Board of the Social Democratic Party of Germany presented its "Bremen Draft Programme" at a consultation in Bremen at the beginning of 2007. It results from an intensive discussion over many years in the SPD Programme Commission. Many suggestions and ideas from the party and society have gone into this draft.

The discussion is not yet over, however. 2007 will be a year of dialogue for the SPD. We want to invite the members of our party and the interested public to use this draft as a basis for discussion about the future of our society. We want to invite citizens to join the SPD and support a policy of social democracy.

Crucial issues are obvious. In what kind of a society do we want to live in future? How can politics shape the process of globalization with social justice? How can we generate enough wealth for all and cope with global ecological risks at the same time? Which opportunities and safeguards do we need in times of turbulent change?

The new Policy Statement of the SPD will be the first pan-German programme since the foundation of the Federal Republic. It describes the rapid change at the beginning of the new century and provides political answers founded on the core values of social democracy, freedom, justice and solidarity.

This draft will be finalised at the SPD Federal Party Conference in Hamburg from October 26-28, 2007. With its "Hamburg Programme" the SPD will chart the course of social democracy in the 21st century.



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Chairman of the SPD

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Bremen, January 2007

Note: This preliminary remark will be replaced by a preamble in the final version at the Federal Party Conference

## 1. Our lifetime

The 21st century is the first really global century. Never before have people relied on one another so much worldwide. With the collapse of Communism and the gift of German unification the division of our country was overcome, as was the global political divide. Since then we have experienced the most profound historical change since the Industrial Revolution – in political and economic terms, but also in social and cultural terms. Science and technology are driving change. The future promises major opportunities but it also entails risks.

Digitized media and other technological developments have revolutionized the concepts of space and time. Everywhere in the world more and more people can communicate with each other via internet in fractions of seconds. Information and knowledge are available at almost all locations of the world by pushing buttons. Thus, for the first time in the history of humankind, a global economy with worldwide division of labour is developing.

### **The world is growing together**

Globalization creates growth and future prospects for people in both rich and poor countries. And in concrete terms it offers opportunities to overcome war and famine, disease and poverty. In many parts of the world people are still living in bitter poverty. In China, India and many other emerging economic powers, dynamic developments and increasing wealth can be observed. Expanding world trade fulfils countless people's hope of finding work in new factories and laboratories.

Globalized capitalism must not be left to itself, however. It allows the old injustices to continue and even creates new hazards to freedom and justice, to health and life.

The necessities of life of more than 6 billion people, more and more of them in industrialized societies, entail the risk of imposing unacceptable ecological burdens on the earth. An increasing part of the world population suffers from the repercussions of global warming, from desertification and water shortages. People from regions where ecological conditions cause famine migrate to less jeopardized parts of the world. Protection of the atmosphere and a peaceful solution to looming conflicts over scarce resources and raw materials number amongst the central challenges in the 21st century. The end of the oil age is drawing closer. With massive improvement of resource productivity and a consistent shift to renewable energies we have the opportunity to counteract this development.

As the world grows together it becomes more and more vulnerable – in political, economic and ecological terms. In some continents states are falling apart and breeding grounds for anarchy and terrorism are spreading. Religious and political fundamentalists are dividing the world into good and evil. This is a threat to peace. The spread of weapons of mass destruction is causing new conflicts.

Economic, social and cultural growing convergence puts the political systems of the nation states under considerable pressure of change. Economic power is concentrated in global corporations. Decisions on placing investments are taken on a global scale. Multi-national corporations plan their profit-making strategies worldwide, undermining democratic monitoring and regulation, and enforcing political decisions to the detriment of society. Central developments can only be influenced by the joint decisions of many states. Europe has progressed far on this path.

After two murderous world wars and the holocaust the peoples of Europe have created a continent of peace and open borders. The peaceful revolutions of 1989 have overcome the division of Europe into East and West. German unification has brought freedom and democracy for our entire country. Even in economic terms the development of the new federal states has improved thanks to the efforts made by the people in eastern Germany and thanks to solidarity between West and East. People are enjoying wealth and quality of life as never before, not only in Germany but almost all over Europe.

At the same time, however, Europe is experiencing a crisis of confidence amongst citizens. People in the states of Europe, even in Germany, request more consideration of social concerns, more respect of national identities and cultural traditions. They want responsible controls on immigration and a level-headed approach to further enlargement of the European Union.

Our Europe is not only a power of peace but also a model of society and economy that is prepared for the future. The united Europe is the first successful project in which nation states are harmonising their interests voluntarily and renouncing central rights of sovereignty in order to act together. Therefore many regions of the world look to Europe with interest and admiration.

### **Accelerated economic activity and profound changes in the world of employment**

Germany has benefited greatly from globalization. Three billion new participants in world economy are not only three billion new potential competitors for jobs but also three billion new consumers. Thanks to a huge competitive edge mainly in industry, German economy is seeing enormous opportunities opening up. In recent decades we have already built our wealth on free trade with other nations. The lion's share of our exports goes to the states of the European Union and North America. Our exports to Eastern Europe are growing; and we are only beginning to develop Russia, China and India as future markets.

But: not everyone in our country has benefited so far. Workforces are experiencing how even flourishing companies are being relocated. Anonymous fund managers are buying and selling companies like traders sell their commodities on a wholesale market – not always to the benefit of those companies, their staff, suppliers and customers. The integration of new markets and new technologies offer finance markets tremendous potential for profit-making. Due to the logic of rapid returns and exaggerated expectations of profit, there will be no long-term investments in

new jobs. This form of globalization might divide society into those who benefit from their capital on the finance markets and those who have to bear the consequential costs.

Progress by technical innovation is replacing heavy physical labour, bringing opportunities for a new type of wealth. In medicine we are gaining control over diseases considered incurable in former times. People's average life expectancy is constantly growing. New products, processes and methods help to save precious raw materials and energy.

Our working society is undergoing profound change. Under the conditions of globalization, competition is becoming fiercer and the variety of employment is increasing. Qualifications and knowledge are becoming more and more important. New creative occupations are developing. Traditional normal employment contracts, permanent and with regular working hours, are losing importance. Working life is now characterized by a change between employment, unemployment, phases of family work and self-employment. Change in the working society can be shaped. The welfare state however has not yet been sufficiently prepared for new forms of work.

In the closely intertwined world of the 21st century many more people and events are gaining direct influence on our lives – even if they are normally far away from us. Therefore it seems the world is becoming faster, more complex and less transparent. When billions of people communicate at record speed, not only does the babble of voices increase but also the difficulty to distinguish the important from the less important.

Many people are not able to cope with the fast pace of our time and its opportunities. They are afraid of being left behind and being neglected or even forgotten by politics. Older workers and people with lower qualifications are more excluded from the labour market than others. Even women with excellent education still do not get fair access to a career and paid employment to make a living. Those in work frequently fear that their quality of life is threatened, given increasing pressure, stronger competition and the demand for permanent availability.

For people in Europe quality of life means more than chasing wealth. People are striving for intact communities where peace, fairness and solidarity prevail and where the genders enjoy equal opportunities and rights. For most people, meaning in life includes the desire to be recognized and needed – not only at work. They want to take time to nurture family life and contacts with children and friends. A life exclusively following the rhythm of the stopwatch and new conditions is contradictory to such a quest. We believe that the social strength of society has at least the same weight as any other locational advantage.

### **The social issues of our time**

After the Second World War social democracy, trade unions and social movements made major progress in the Federal Republic of Germany. More people than ever before were able to take part in cultural and social life and social security reached a high standard.

Some of these success stories, however, are in jeopardy. The gap between rich and poor is widening again. People with few skills or with specific difficulties in finding a job are facing the threat of being excluded from future opportunities. Many people fear that fending for themselves by employment will remain wishful thinking. This is particularly true for many people in the eastern ('new') federal states. Most migrant families or single mothers and fathers struggle hard to earn a living and provide a good life for their children. Many, however, have been living on benefit for three generations. Frequently poverty is inherited because far too many parents do not have any prospects on the labour market and because their children are not sufficiently supported. In Germany, more than elsewhere, opportunities for good education depend on the parents' background. For many people the ladder of social advancement is out of reach.

Even more than in the past, equal opportunities depend on good education as a foundation for the forthcoming knowledge age. This is the key to having a successful career at work and to managing one's own life. Knowledge and competence must be acquired early on and brushed up time and again – in kindergarten, at school and in subsequent periods of life. First-class education for all is the basis for preventing social divides and overcoming poverty.

Our society has progressed far on the way towards equal opportunities for women and men. Yet still many cannot realize their plans for their lives. Women and men want to make progress at work and at the same time take responsibility for children and their family. Almost exclusively, however, the task of combining a family with a job is still left to mothers.

In many parts of the world, including Germany, people are living longer. Since the 1960s, life expectancy in Germany has increased by ten years. This is a great gift. Thus many have the chance, after retirement, to enjoy another extended period of life. Demographic change, however, also requires a new image of old age. The older generation will be needed more in future to actively shape society. Family structures are also changing. Children and grandchildren do not necessarily live in the neighbourhood of parents and grandparents, and the number of one-person households including the elderly, is also growing. More people will depend on assistance by society in their old age.

At the same time fewer and fewer young men and women are fulfilling their wishes for children. This is leading to drastic changes in all areas of everyday life, from the world of employment to the social systems and potential of entire regions. Quite often the emigration of young people, shrinking populations and the ageing of entire regions are painful processes. Rapid demographic change is reality, not only in eastern Germany. Not abandoning any region means supporting people locally in the attempt to organize their home area to improve the quality of life there.

Religions and cultures are disseminated and interlinked worldwide to a growing extent. Nowadays almost everywhere in the world, people find members of their culture, goods from their home countries and media helping them to stay in touch with their countries of origin. On the other hand, they meet members of other cultures in their home countries. Where social antagonisms clash the existence of parallel cultures and a lack of

understanding of the 'other' may lead to mistrust and conflict. Peaceful coexistence requires more knowledge about other traditions, readiness for cooperation and mutual respect. No religion or culture must propagate violence as a means of enforcing interests.

As a consequence of economic and technological change, demographic development and need for social integration, our cities and communities are facing major challenges. At the same time, the expectations of citizens are rising. In the light of globalization communities are becoming more important as locations where people experience solidarity and shared identity.

## **Politics in the process of change**

The 21st century has seen a change in the conditions for political institutions and parties. Their creative power is questioned because borders have lost their importance. Wherever the most varied lifestyles have developed and more and more actors have an influence many people are taking their leave of traditional party affiliations. Since democratic political parties aim at shaping society by means of legislation, they distinguish themselves from other organizations of political participation. This is their unmistakable and indispensable democratic legitimization and responsibility. This will not change, even though parties have lost some of the trust and reputation they once enjoyed.

Trust and reputation, however, must be regained over and over, by developing convincing plans of action. And this is possible, since ours is not an apolitical age. There is a great longing for political orientation. People want to take an active part in shaping comprehensible policies. Many are active in parties, trade unions, social movements, civic action groups and lobbying groups, many of which are interlinked worldwide. The new media represent a great opportunity for political participation. More than ever before, many people have a chance to voice their political opinions and to take an active part in creative political processes.

Social democrats are convinced that we ourselves can shape the future in peace, justice and solidarity. To this end, we need a clear and regularly renewed analysis of our time. There is no going back to the era of the old industrial society and the nation state of the 20th century. We are looking ahead.



## 2. Core values of Social Democracy

### Our background

German Social Democracy has always been part of a larger international movement. From the start our goal has been to realize a common policy in Europe and in the world. We are witnessing a growth in the knowledge, understanding and opportunities needed to achieve this aim.

Even before the Berlin Programme of 1989 we focussed on the dimension of a world growing together, on peace, justice and the model of sustainable development, safeguarding and maintaining the foundation of human civilization. We are still working on the project of a common Europe which, in the Heidelberg Programme of 1925, was described as a vision and which we can now accomplish. Since its origin, German Social Democracy has considered itself part of a liberation movement striving for more democracy and justice in all modern societies. We are proud that we have never brought war, oppression or dictatorship to our people. Social democrats struggled for voting rights for women in Germany. With the refounding of the Social Democratic Party in the German Democratic Republic, courageous social democrats professed freedom in solidarity with civic action groups in Central and Eastern Europe.

The SPD can look back over 150 years of experience: from the struggle for the economic and political rights of workers in the 19th century to taking over national responsibility in government in the Weimar Republic, from resistance against national socialism to the political fight against communism, from the formation of the democratic and social constitutional state in the Federal Republic and the renewal of the reunited Germany at the end of the 20th century. On this long road many social democrats have fallen victim to persecution and murder. To us they remain a source of constant admonition and commitment.

Social democrats decisively shaped the history of our country, its political and social culture. Women and men of various philosophical convictions, faiths and backgrounds came together in the SPD. Thus the SPD became the people's party of the left which it has understood itself to be since the Godesberg Programme in 1959. It has adopted impulses and ideas from various intellectual currents and political movements: Christianity and humanism, the Enlightenment, socialism and trade unions, the women's movement and the new social movements.

### We know

- that hardship and fear cannot be overcome by dictatorial means but only by the people themselves, through free decisions and joint efforts,
- that we must act in solidarity if we want to be successful,
- that we need visions to foster consistent reforms,
- that freedom and security belong together, and that we must strive for both in parallel,
- that we live in cultural variety and find partners throughout the world,
- and that we must constantly review the results of our policy in self-criticism.

## Our concept of humankind

The same dignity of all people is the starting point and aim of our policy. In the way we understand what it means to be human, humanist and religious concepts are combined with ideas of the Enlightenment.

People have diverse potentials that are neither inherently good nor evil. They have the gift of reason and they are able to learn. Therefore democracy is possible. They are fallible and may err and revert to inhumanity. Therefore democracy is necessary. Everyone is responsible for their own life. Nobody can or should take this responsibility away. Our political philosophy rejects any claim to omnipotence over people. If governments promise happiness and fulfilment they run the risk of lapsing into totalitarian rule.

“Free and equal in dignity and rights”, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights puts it, everyone shall be able to determine their own life in community with others. We are aiming at a society in which everyone has the chance to develop their personality in freedom, without impairing the dignity and freedom of others. We reject any form of discrimination. Human dignity is independent of performance and economic usefulness. Therefore society is specifically committed to the protection of human dignity in case of disablement, old age, at the beginning and at the end of life.

## Our core values

Freedom and equality, freedom of citizens from arbitrariness on the part of authorities, and their equality independent of class, religion, background and gender – these are the two principal orientations of the political modern age. The interlinkage of freedom and equality forms the basis for our concept of justice.

The social democratic understanding of freedom, justice and solidarity gained particular meaning in the political and social conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries. The idea was to fight for equality of political and economic participation and basic chances in life, hence for social justice, in addition to legal and material preconditions for freedom and equal rights.

**Freedom** means the possibility of self-determination, and of taking charge of one's own life. Free development of one's personality has specific preconditions, including the rejection of arbitrariness and oppression as well as access to social, economic, cultural and political conditions of freedom. Participation in society and individual readiness for creative responsibility for one's own life and life in community are also preconditions for freedom. Individual freedom ends where it impairs the freedom of others.

**Justice** is the expression of the equal dignity of every person. It means equal freedom and equal opportunities, independent of background or gender. For a truly just society the equality of citizens before the law does not suffice. Justice means that all people have equal chances to develop their talents. As a prerequisite all must be given the same opportunities to take part in education, work, social security, culture and democracy.

Our society is still characterized by privileges. The unfair distribution of income, assets and opportunities divides society into those giving instructions and those following instructions, and whose self-determination and political participation meet with limitations at an early stage. This also influences decision-making in political and public life. Equal opportunities in life mean not uniformity but space for developing personal predilections and talents. People are different. However, natural inequalities and social differences in background must not become social destiny. Paths through life must not be fixed from the beginning. Therefore justice needs more equality in terms of distribution of income, property and power. Fair policy-making guarantees equal possibilities of access to public assets, equal opportunities and the distribution of income and property in line with personal performance. Individual performance must be acknowledged and respected. Those enjoying advantages through income and property must contribute appropriately to the wellbeing of society: 'property entails obligations' (§14 German Constitution). Fair policy respects different ways of life, differences in religious conviction, world outlook and culture. It guarantees every person - independently of performance - a life without hardship and participation in the life of society.

**Solidarity** means mutual attachment, belonging and assistance. It is the readiness of people to stand up for each other and provide support between the strong and the vulnerable, between generations and peoples. Solidarity creates strength for change. This is the experience of the labour movement. Solidarity is a strong force that ties our society together – in spontaneous and individual readiness to give assistance, with common rules and organizations, and in the politically guaranteed and organized solidarity of the welfare state.

Freedom, justice and solidarity form a unity. They are of equal rank and value. They condition, limit and complement one another. We defend a concept of core values which does not reduce freedom to the freedom of markets, justice to the constitutional state, and solidarity to welfare payments for the poor.

## Social Democracy

Social democracy wants participation of all in society guaranteed by basic rights and guided by the concept of citizens in solidarity. We can only improve conditions by common action for the good of all.

We agree on the goal of enabling life in freedom for all without exploitation, free of violence and oppression. In the awareness that striving for a society in line with our core values is a permanent task, we subscribe to the idea of democratic socialism that characterizes our history. It is neither dogma nor does it describe a final situation – it is the vision of a free and fair society in solidarity, for whose realization we are still fighting. Working for this aim and the principle for our action is Social Democracy. After all, nothing comes by itself and every age needs its own answers.

### 3. Social Democracy in the 21st Century

Under the conditions of our lifetime the idea of social democracy is gaining new meaning. The age of globalization is the result of human action and it can therefore be shaped by democratic policy. Our society has various options:

Either we let the change of our time take its course – or we shape it in the spirit of our core values.

Either we restrict ourselves to merely defending the existing situation – or we allow the potential of our society to come to full fruition.

Either we allow the ecological crisis to destroy the foundations of our civilization – or we make the turnaround to a sustainable form of economy and life.

Either we allow the gap between rich and poor, between the privileged and the disadvantaged to widen more and more – or we pursue a policy able to reduce social antagonisms, offering all people the chance to shape their lives in self-determination.

The course we steer will be decisive for the quality of life, wealth and cohesion of our society. Progress needs social democracy. To achieve it, we want to win over the people.

We go into the controversies with the opponents of social democracy with a lot of self-confidence. Nowadays we have to deal with three major political currents outside the democratic spectrum of opinions which, each in its own way, prevents people from tapping their potential in the best conceivable fashion:

Conservatives are sticking to outmoded privileges, claiming seemingly natural imbalances to prevent other people from gaining access to opportunities in life, advancement and wealth.

Radical market protagonists are preaching freedom and competition without realizing that a dynamic society of the free and equal always has social preconditions. It can only prosper where creative policy-making continually renews the conditions for the participation and performance of all.

Populists are denying changed realities, clinging to old-fashioned instruments of the nation state. They are trying to delude people into thinking that they can escape the realities of our time – and precisely by doing so they obstruct people's future.

We agree with all democrats on defending the basic consensus of our free democracy against all enemies of an open and tolerant society. Therefore we shall jointly and resolutely oppose all ambitions of a rightwing extremist or anti-Semitic nature, hostile to human rights and the German constitution.

We social democrats are facing up to reality: the world, Europe and our own country are rapidly changing. We see the implications of this every day in our suburbs, communities, shop-floors and schools. If we want to make sure that the values and aims of social democracy will also shape the 21st century we must seize the manifold opportunities inherent in this change without fear. Only those who act will create the conditions needed to cope with the new risks and hazards of our time.

At the beginning of the 21st century we have set ourselves four major tasks:

- We want to **shape globalization in freedom, justice and solidarity**. For this purpose we need to regain the capacity to take political action. That calls for a strong and social Europe, and a globally responsible community made up of civil society, business and politicians.
- We want a **policy of a new type of value added**. It enables qualitative growth, wealth and work for all as well as safeguarding natural life support systems. The social market economy of the future must actively develop new markets, shape technical progress to the benefit of humankind and the environment and guarantee fair competition.
- We want a **forward-looking welfare state**, creating opportunities for a self-directed life, enabling fair participation and social advancement and guaranteeing security through solidarity.
- And at all levels, we want to strengthen the enormous potential and forces of self-organization of an **active civil society**.

These projects define the idea of Social Democracy for the 21st century. In its unity, it does not set economics up against ecology, the state against the citizen or performance against solidarity. It will overcome old antagonisms in the interest of human beings.

## 4. Our aims, our policy

### 4.1 A peaceful, free and fair world order

The international policy of German Social Democracy serves the purpose of preventing conflicts and creating peace. Our principles for this goal are mutual understanding and international solidarity. We favour dialogue, the fair balance of different interests and the idea of subjecting power to law. The SPD is the party of peace in Germany and Europe.

More than ever, this international policy orientation of Social Democracy is necessary for the coming global age. For the first time in its history, humanity can solve central problems only together. This is why we are working for the development of a common world domestic policy with a strong United Nations and a just world economic order.

Since the end of the East-West conflict no new security architecture has yet been developed for the global age. At present the USA is the only military super power – but it also depends on international cooperation. New powers want to climb up onto the world stage and play their roles. We therefore need anticipatory international political leadership, that will recognize new developments early on and shape them in a spirit of understanding and fair compromise.

Social Democracy is aware of Germany's growing responsibility for peace in the world. We are accepting this active international role by strongly committing ourselves. In doing so, we have established close coordination with our partners and act jointly with international institutions. German interests in the world can only be asserted in cooperation with our partners in the European Union.

Social democratic policy puts the dignity of each individual at the centre. Our Basic Law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international law are guidelines for our international policy. Our actions are based on human rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The indivisibility and universal validity of all human rights are non-negotiable for social democrats. We want to enforce an absolute ban on torture and defend humanitarian international law even under changing national and global conditions. We want to make sure that women all over the world can take responsibility for their own lives, without violence and discrimination. Without the equal participation of women democracy, global justice and sustainable development are inconceivable.

It is not the law of the strongest but the strength of the law that creates international security. We therefore continue working for a fair international law enabling all people to live in self-determination and dignity. We ground our international policy on a comprehensive concept of security. Security for all people requires peace, justice and freedom, democracy, social, economic, cultural and sustainable development. We therefore support multilateralism and equal opportunities for development in a just world economic order.

We act towards other peoples in a spirit of friendship, openness and respect. We recognize that many civilizations have contributed to the cultural heritage of humankind. We clearly reject those evoking up a clash of civilizations. We want to strongly improve knowledge about other cultures and religions. We believe in an active foreign cultural policy creating interest and understanding for our country, and promoting dialogue with other cultures.

Germany has specific responsibility for peace and understanding because of its history. War must never again spread from German soil. We commit ourselves to responsibility for victims of National Socialism and to a lively culture of remembrance.

Social Democracy accepts Germany's specific responsibility for Israel's right to exist. For this reason; too; we commit ourselves to comprehensive

peace in the Middle East on the basis of international agreements. We support the self-determination of the Palestinian people and the creation of a viable Palestinian state.

The SPD wants to renew the transatlantic partnership. Europe and the USA share common values. On this foundation, Europe and North America cooperate closely, also in NATO. Since the collapse of communism, however, the Transatlantic Alliance has needed a new foundation orientated towards the global age. We want to intensify the search for common understanding of values and strengthen the awareness of common goals. A peaceful world order can only be achieved in cooperation with the United States.

Friendship and cooperation between Germany and France has always been the engine of European unification. In accordance with this model we also want to develop our relation with Poland.

Strategic partnership with Russia is indispensable for Germany and the European Union. Russia's opening to Europe safeguards peace and stability. It brings economic prospects for people on both sides. In our opinion, partnership and further development of democracy and the constitutional state go together.

German and European foreign, development and security policy must nurture close relations to emerging powers in Asia, Latin America and Africa. This is where we find many partners for the development of a multilateral world order. We favour fair partnership and intensive cooperation with them and their integration in the structure of international organizations and institutions.

Social democrats want all nations, peoples and individuals to benefit from peace and wealth. In a world of growing mutual dependencies we shall not neglect or forget any continent.

### **Multilateralism: strengthening global and regional cooperation**

In Europe, by means of understanding and combining common interests, we have achieved an unprecedented form of transnational cooperation and partnership. European policy is no longer classical foreign policy. Even beyond Europe common interests, alliances and organizations need to be strengthened. In the global age no state can be successful by enforcing interests unilaterally. We believe in multilateralism by international organizations and international law on a worldwide scale. For this purpose it is indispensable to equip the international organizations with adequate enforcement powers. Only with the leverage of sanctions will international law become binding and able to resolve conflicts.

For this reason we want to strengthen the United Nations. We favour the transformation of the United Nations to become the supreme instance of a global legal system. We want to create and enforce global law. For this purpose international jurisdiction must be strengthened. Necessary funds must be raised by the international community in its own interest.

In order to strengthen the legitimation and acceptance of the United Nations its institutions must be reformed and democratized. We want to strengthen the rights of the UN General Assembly. Appropriate participation by all continents must be safeguarded in any reform of the UN Security Council. We reject the veto rights of individual member states. We therefore need a reform of the UN Security Council, and the veto right for individual countries should be reviewed. In the United Nations Germany must accept more concrete responsibility. The SPD favours a permanent seat for Germany in the UN Security Council. In the long term the European Union should get a permanent seat in this body.

We want to strengthen the position of the UN Secretary General to enable the United Nations to act swiftly and efficiently in international crisis situations, and where there are a threats of crises or massive violations of human rights.

Peace and security, protection from epidemics and financial stability are global public goods. International funding is also required for them. The United Nations need its own sources of income for more independence.

Decisions in international institutions and organizations like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization must be measured with the yardstick of justice and human rights and they must be transparent. The distribution of votes must consider the interests of the poorest developing countries.

Regional international organizations are important to overcome antagonisms and conflicts among peoples. The Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have demonstrated this ability with their successful work. Germany must continue to support these two institutions in future. Similar institutions in other regions must be developed and strengthened.

Social democracy attributes high importance to the work of organizations in civil society for understanding among nations. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, non-governmental organizations and religious communities constantly monitor current international conflicts, and start to develop solutions. These groups of civil society and state institutions must therefore cooperate intensively. We consider ourselves partners of organizations in civil society that have committed themselves to solving global problems.

### **Comprehensive security policy**

Peace means much more to Social Democrats than the absence of war. The preventive avoidance of conflicts has absolute priority for us. Each conflict that can be settled in time spares people a lot of hardship. Crisis prevention is the most efficient security policy.

Forward-looking foreign policy is many-faceted, in our opinion. We want the European Union to interact more closely with neighbouring regions to promote peace and good prospects for people's future.



Good peace policy is founded on political dialogue, elaborating common interests and developing tangible prospects for people. We are convinced that permanent peace is only possible where the structural root causes of conflict, such as hunger and a lack of resources, are eliminated.

In our opinion development cooperation is not only a matter of humanness and the fair structuring of globalization. We consider it a central building-block of comprehensive security policy. We therefore want to gradually increase the funds for development cooperation. We want to make sure that German contributions to fighting poverty and underdevelopment increase to 0.7% of gross domestic product by 2015. Central goals remain combating poverty also by fighting corruption, advocating for women rights, promoting good governance and systematic debt relief for developing countries. We want to increase the funds for civil crisis prevention and improve the tools of such a policy.

The SPD rejects any form of aggressive or pre-emptive war.

We know that there may be situations when military intervention becomes necessary. Germany may take part in such missions if they are legitimized by an internationally binding mandate of the United Nations, if the deployment does not clash with German interests and if the Federal Parliament agrees.

Conflicts may be resolved by military means, but they cannot be resolved by military means only. For this reason we shall urge that deployments of the German Armed Forces always be embedded in a broader framework for political, diplomatic, economic, developmental and cultural action. In our view the military option has always been the last means for creating peace. Even for stabilizing peace we want to deploy soldiers only if other means do not suffice.

The German Armed Forces are doing an excellent job in their international deployments. Because of their professional approach they rightly enjoy high esteem worldwide. Good training of soldiers is therefore as important as good equipment. We shall continue redirecting the armed forces to tasks involving international crisis solution. As citizens in uniform, German soldiers are also ambassadors of our country acting on the founding values of our Constitution.

## **New risks**

Terrorism has taken on new dimensions. Terrorist groups are acting in global networks; they do not shrink back from suicidal attacks and aim at appropriation of weapons of mass destruction. Denationalized terrorist violence is threatening the entire world. We reject any justification of terrorism. Even if the use of violence cannot be ruled out in the fight against terrorism our principle applies: we consistently reject any watering down of international law. Neither the absolute ban on torture nor rules for treating prisoners and prisoners of war must be interpreted in relative terms. Fighting terror flourishing on the humus of hopelessness and powerlessness will need more time, and also more funds.

In Europe we have safeguarded peace by means of a fair balance of interests. Europe is therefore now called upon to contribute its experience to a new policy of détente.

In the global age, a safe supply of energy, raw materials and water are crucial issues for international security. The same applies to the protection of the atmosphere, and protection from and coping with natural disasters. In that regard we look to the action programme Agenda 21 of the United Nations. Renewable energies and improvement of energy efficiency are key to peaceful development. With their help we can fight poverty and prevent conflicts over scarce resources.

The collapse of states is leading to the dissemination of anarchy and lawlessness. This is a challenge for the entire international community of states. Germany and Europe must be prepared to take responsibility for re-establishing statehood and the structures of civil society.

## **Disarmament and non-proliferation**

Increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction requires the renaissance of a policy of arms limitation, effective arms control and disarmament. This is conflict prevention and forward-looking peace policy as we understand it. A trademark of the SPD, it is a policy we want to foster jointly with our European partners. We underscore our aim of a world without nuclear weapons, campaigning for the international monitoring of uranium enrichment. We want to enforce an international, legally binding ban on the use of nuclear weapons. We are also dedicating increased efforts to the limitation and control of conventional arms. We want to achieve the prohibition of land mines and cluster bombs. Regarding disarmament, we call for the improvement and strengthening of multilateral treaties.

In future, too, we shall make sure that Germany does not aim at producing, owning and utilizing weapons of mass destruction. We are committed to a strict arms export policy. Arms are no ordinary commodities. Compliance with human rights, good governance and a ban on arms delivery to conflict regions are decisive criteria for export licences.

## **Shaping globalization**

The aim of Social Democracy is fair globalization bringing wealth and development for people. Locational competition between economic areas must not lead to worldwide pressure on wages, and to a worsening of working conditions, social benefits and environmental standards. International capital must not evade its social and ecological responsibility and nor must it evade taxes. This requires fair and efficient rules for finance, raw materials and commodity markets as well as internationally binding social and ecological standards for functioning competition. We therefore want to regain and expand possibilities for the control of economies by international cooperation and regulatory frameworks without releasing national politicians from their responsibility. In so doing we want to realize the millennium goals of the UN and pave the way for a fair world economic order.

At the international level we need a body ensuring real coordination and coherence in economic, social and ecological issues. For this reason, under the umbrella of the UN, we need a global council for economic, social and environmental policy, with high-ranking representatives from all regions including international trade and finance institutions.

We need more fairness in world trade. Developing countries do not want charity – they want fair chances on the markets. Within the scope of the WTO industrialized countries must therefore open their markets, gradually reducing and finally terminating the subsidization of agricultural exports.

Economic globalization threatens to undermine the primacy of democratic politics in essential areas. We want to defend the primacy of politics since this is the only means to enforce global democracy as a structural principle.

Uncontrolled capital movements on international finance markets may jeopardize entire national economies. We seek efficient structural frameworks for financial markets. We reject the privatization of profits whilst, in case of financial crises, the general public has to make up for losses incurred. The competition between nation states to lower taxes must be stopped since it endangers the foundations of social policy.

For the defence of workers' rights even internationally, we want to strengthen the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Core Working Standards of the ILO must be considered more strongly in decisions taken by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization and United Nations. To realize these goals free trade unions are indispensable all over the world.

Plagues and epidemics do not acknowledge national borders. To fight them we need global solutions. The fight against HIV/AIDS nowadays is one of the central challenges of humankind.

In the attempt to enforce environmental and social standards we deliberately include the power of consumers. All products and services offered in proven compliance with international rules for health and safety at work, core labour standards and ecologically sustainable production are to receive a quality label that can easily be identified and read. Regarding the aim of fair globalization multinational corporations are also to be committed. Agreements by means of which global companies promise their employees and customers that they will comply worldwide with basic social standards are appropriate tools for enforcing such standards. Ecological understanding requires social preconditions. We are convinced, nevertheless, that we can create common awareness of the interests of humankind and the environment in a globally interconnected world.

## 4.2 Social and democratic Europe

Since the adoption of the Heidelberg Programme in 1925 German Social Democrats have been fighting for Europe's unification. Many things that seemed to be out of reach at the time seem normal today. European unification on the debris of two World Wars has enabled the most peaceful period since the existence of this continent. War, expulsion and hunger

are past history. People enjoy stability and wealth. The European Union is a project of peace.

Europe is not only an economic area but also a community of democratic and social values. Our concepts of freedom, justice and solidarity are anchored in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. The European model of society is based on these values. The European policy on equal opportunities for women and men and against discrimination points the way forward.

Social Democracy in Europe stands for a policy enabling everyone to shape personal life and make progress by performance. We want to make sure that people can rely on solidarity of the community when they need it. We want a tolerant Europe where people of all nations, colours and religions can live together. The variety of cultures and traditions are assets we want to nurture carefully.

The European Union is our response to globalization, freedom and democracy. Wealth and justice in Germany can only be safeguarded together with our partners in the global age. At the European and international levels we are pooling our forces to establish rules for global markets, for more fairness and more social and ecological responsibility. We want to enable the European Union to become a functioning power for peace.

## **Peace power Europe**

The European Union is elaborating a peace policy based on conflict prevention, a comprehensive concept of security and multilateralism.

If Europe wants to become a power for global peace the European Union must improve its capacity to act in the field of foreign policy. We support the strengthening of our common European foreign and security policy. Improving EU capabilities in security and defence policy also serves the purpose of strengthening the European pillar of the transatlantic alliance.

The armies of the European nation states are to grow together even more closely. Our target is a European Security and Defence Union. The first necessary step is the creation of units with integrated forces under united command. In the mid-term this does not need to affect all areas of military cooperation. In the long term we aim for an European army whose deployment must be legitimized by Parliament.

For a comprehensive security policy the European Union must combine its economic and political weight. In so doing, Europe must speak with one voice in the important international organizations. This will enable the European states to work effectively for a socially fair distribution of globally generated wealth and for the democratization of international regimes and organizations. Europe must not reduce its efforts in the field of development policy.

The enlargement of the European Union has created peace, stability and wealth in Europe. At the same time, the EU model is attractive beyond Europe. Many countries are undertaking major efforts to become mem-

bers of the European Union. This entails reforms in those countries improving the tangible living conditions of people.

We are doing our utmost to abide by promises made to countries on the likelihood of accession. Current negotiations for accession are to be continued in accordance with criteria defined by the EU. Before further enlargement of the EU its institutions must be reformed.

We stand by Turkey's prospects of accession promised by all EU members long ago. If Turkey commits itself to European values it can fulfil an important bridging function to other Islamic countries. Such a role of Turkey is in the German and European interest since it will create peace, stability and economic expectations.

In countries without prospects for membership even in the long term, it is crucial to support people in their striving for democracy, a constitutional state and social equilibrium. For this reason we will strongly promote further developments in the European Neighbourhood Policy.

## Social Europe

Europe has created the largest single market in the world and introduced a common currency. Now the social dimension of the EU must be strengthened because it is the centrepiece of our European model of society. In a European constitution social democrats therefore want to give the social dimension the same weight as the principle of competition. Fundamental social rights stipulated in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights must become reality.

There are different national forms and traditions of the European social model. However, all welfare states have a well-developed and efficient public sector, social systems for protection from the basic risks of life, services of general interest, rules for working conditions as well as rights for worker participation and codetermination.

We will maintain and further develop these strengths of Europe. We do not want to standardize social systems but to agree on common minimum standards. These are intended to guarantee fair conditions for competition between states to prevent social dumping.

Workers' rights are an essential component of the European social model. With better regulations for health and safety at work we want to clearly improve working conditions for people in Europe. We aim for a European labour law stipulating uniform basic standards, for example regarding the right to strike and collective bargaining. In European corporations we want to safeguard and expand codetermination of the workforce.

In Europe we want to replace social dumping by fair competition between locations. To enable agreements of this kind we suggest corridors for social and education expenditures using the yardstick of economic efficiency. This guarantees a minimum of social security and investments in education and training. Those who want to work abroad in Europe should not be prevented from doing so by social systems.

We want to overcome the race to reach the lowest company income tax rates in Europe. This is the reason why European states deprive each other of their financial room for action. Throughout Europe we need a uniform basis for assessment of and minimum rates for corporate taxes.

The European social model grants free and low-cost access to high-standard public services. We want to make these principles binding at the European level. Each member state shall independently decide on structures for services of general interest.

Raising living standards in economically disadvantaged regions is beneficial for all in Europe. The European Union therefore particularly supports such regions in catching up economically. Cohesion in Europe can only be guaranteed if wages and social standards are not lowered. We want to introduce minimum wages for a secure livelihood.

There is no doubt that the European Single Market has brought efficiency and welfare gains. It continues to open up opportunities for developing economic creativity beyond the borders of nation states. To make good use of this asset we want to prudently enlarge the Single Market and do away with bureaucratic obstacles. In this effort we want to make sure that opening markets and limiting bureaucracy does not entail declining social and ecological standards.

Europe is a knowledge-based economic area. Europe can therefore only increase its competitiveness in global competition by more investment in innovation, research and development. All members of the European Union have committed themselves to this aim. Now it is crucial to realize this project consistently.

We want selective promotion of innovation and product research to develop future markets. An important contribution is made by European research alliances. We need coordinated industry policy in Europe and European champions in international competition.

A future-oriented Europe also needs a thorough restructuring of the European budget. This also means that the budgetary policy of the EU must become more transparent. The level of subsidies for agriculture must be reduced and this money used instead for future investments. We want to promote innovation and product research in a targeted fashion to develop future markets.

In order to promote economic dynamism, to safeguard stability and realize the social dimension of the EU in member states we need well-coordinated economic, finance and monetary policies in the European Union to meet binding macro-economic targets. We therefore argue for more coordination among those states that have introduced the Euro. In parallel to currency stability, the European Central Bank must put the same weight on promoting growth and employment. We want to develop the Stability and Growth Pact in the European Union to offer more scope for national structural reforms and future investments.

## Democratic Europe

By means of its growing competences the European Union has acquired its own characteristics of statehood. Therefore all political action of the European Union must be democratically legitimized. The more we progress with political integration the more urgent the task to build real European democracy becomes. A crucial foundation will be a European Constitution. It will pave the way to an Executive of the European Union elected and supervised by Parliament.

The European Union brings together persons and institutions at the European, national, regional and local levels in the political decision-making process. For this reason it must draw its democratic legitimation from various sources. The aim of our policy is to further develop the European Union as a functioning multi-level democracy open for participation.

The powers of the European Parliament must therefore be consistently strengthened. Parliament must take part in the entire European legislative process on an equal basis with national governments meeting in the Council of Ministers. Even in issues of European foreign, security and defence policies as well as in agricultural policy we call for the right of co-decision for the European Parliament. The European Parliament needs comprehensive parliamentary rights of democratic supervision over the European Commission and the right to take its own legal initiatives.

We support more active involvement of national parliaments in European political issues. Their rights to information and participation are to be strengthened consistently. National parliaments must have the chance to thoroughly check whether the European Union abides by the principle of subsidiarity in its rulings. National parliaments and the European Parliament at their respective levels are equally responsible partners in democratic control of the EU.

Europe's democracy is primarily shaped in communities and regions. The EU must organize its federal and inter-state levels democratically and transparently only intervening when European wide rules are required.

European democracy can only survive in the long run if it rests on political commitment and publicly articulated will of citizens in Europe. European policy, more than ever before, must therefore be discussed by a European public. Europe needs democratic debates about political alternatives. This is why we want to strengthen direct rights of participation for citizens. By the same token, strong European parties and organizations of civil society are indispensable.

Our goal is to transform the Party of European Socialists (PES) into a politically strong party in terms of members and programmes. In future, members of social democratic parties in Europe are to form the PES. We advocate the elaboration of a social democratic policy statement for Europe.

### 4.3 Civil society based on solidarity and the democratic state

Each democracy lives by its citizens' commitment. Therefore we want a strong and vital society of citizens where people make abundant use of their freedom of opinion and association. This is the only way for our society to find strength for continuing renewal. A society of self-confident citizens shapes and organizes its living together in a functioning state.

An efficient transparent state close to the citizens is essential, particularly in a world where strong individual interests try to privatize public responsibilities. We know that a complete legal framework for all situations in life does not lead to more justice and that laws cannot resolve all problems. However, we want to make sure that public interests remain under the primacy of political responsibility..

We want strong parliaments. They are at the heart of democratic decision-making. We want parliamentarians to be backed and encouraged by lively public debate. Parties are instrumental in political decision-making by the people. With this tool they gain an outstanding place in our parliamentary democracy. Parties have the task to safeguard the ongoing political participation of citizens in the decision-taking process. We take this mission seriously. We want to arouse fresh enthusiasm for democracy and achieve higher turnouts in elections and more direct involvement. We stand for more democracy and more direct possibilities of citizen participation as a complement to parliamentary democracy. Within legal limits petitions for referendums and referendums are to complement parliamentary decisions at the local, regional and national levels. The constitutional restrictions on majority power are also applicable to direct citizen involvement.

Good governance in a functioning state requires the abolition of useless bureaucracy. To fulfil its tasks in rapid change we need a thorough-going modernization of administration. Public funds must not be wasted anywhere. We do not want a nanny state but one that activates and serves its citizens, handling the tasks allocated by them in a target-oriented, efficient and economic way.

Those accepting posts and mandates have major responsibility. (...) We want politicians to stay in touch with society and be guided by honesty, openness and transparency.

#### Civil society based on solidarity

More people than ever before lead an active, emancipated and independent life of their own choice. There is more knowledge about other countries and cultures, self-confidence and opportunities for action. We want our society to benefit more strongly from this kind of knowledge and experience. People need incentives for this but also a favourable environment. Social responsibility of people for people must gain more importance in our state. This is what we mean by a civil society based on solidarity. This is the greatest potential for social democracy in our time.



A strong civil society provides shelter in times of turbulent change. Whenever people stand up for people they experience readiness to take responsibility, a sense of justice, mutual recognition, solidarity and moderation in the use of individual freedom. New cohesion spreads from this lived solidarity in society – against the individualization of people and centrifugal forces of modern life. We find orientation, trust and security where we jointly solve social problems.

Civil society is organized in clubs, foundations and initiatives, mainly kept going by voluntary commitment. If citizens act together they can tackle many practical assignments by themselves. Their strength is to give others incentives to take part, to recognize problems in time and solve them appropriately. We want to make sure that honorary functions gain more recognition, incentive and better security. Many people use their time to act on behalf of society. Others provide funds from their private capital. Both is necessary. We want to link honorary functions with a culture of donating to public foundations.

Democratic parties, trade unions, churches and religious communities as well as social and environmental associations are outstanding pillars of a civil society based on solidarity. The younger generation in particular is looking for attractive opportunities to become active in a community and to experience surplus value by solidarity. Social movements take up current issues time and again, they strive for global justice, and environmental and consumer protection. We want to strengthen such organizations. They are our partners.

Sports offer challenge and recognition. This is true for mass sports and sports for the disabled and likewise for high-performance sports. In sports clubs ambition and solidarity can meet beyond age limits, social and cultural differences. Clubs activate and connect people. Sport is also beneficial in terms of preventive health care. It fosters fairness and tolerance. Therefore we protect and promote sports as a crucial part of culture at the national, regional and local levels.

### **Strong communities**

A civil society based on solidarity finds its place mainly in local communities. They shape the everyday life of people and challenges grow there as well. It is in communities that the decision is taken whether all children get support in their early childhood. Here we can observe whether people of various cultures live together or in parallel. Here it is clear whether adolescents organize their leisure time in a meaningful way, if the elderly remain integrated and if people feel safe in public places. Social antagonisms have to be balanced out in communities; living quarters and services must be adapted when people grow older or move away and when the number of inhabitants decreases. It is here that historic monuments are to be preserved and a lively building culture is to be created. In the local and regional setting, with their own history and culture, people find a home, community, transparency and security in times of change.

Communities are able to respond well to specific local characteristics. They develop a wide range of potential solutions for a wide range of

tasks. This is why we are strengthening local self-government, improving its quality and enlarging its organizational room for action. We will improve the financial scope of communities but we will not confer tasks on them without necessary funding.

### **The German ‘welfare federation’**

The democratic and social welfare state is one of the most important pre-conditions for the success of the Federal Republic of Germany. We will abide by this principle. It means: decisions must be taken close to tasks and problems. In this regard, too, we follow the concept of subsidiarity. This means: the smaller political unit has priority over the larger one.

Shifting central responsibilities to the European Union, the challenges of globalization and demographic changes are putting the welfare state under considerable pressure for renewal. Federalism must gain fresh strength. We want to shape our federal structure more transparently. Federal government and federal states, on their own and together, must become more efficient. The separation of powers must be oriented to the best conceivable solution of problems instead of clinging to spheres of responsibility. Among neighbouring states we support closer cooperation including the joint handling of tasks. We are in favour of unifying states if such steps improve creative political power, meeting with the consent of their citizens. We want to promote and challenge the inherent strengths of cities and regions.

In future we shall continue to confer political decision-taking power to the European Union if the larger European legal space promotes more security and wealth for citizens. Yet we shall only give up powers of the nation state in favour of European or international institutions if their democratic supervision is guaranteed.

Regional disparities in economic and financial power have increased. Prospering conurbation areas are becoming hubs of economic and cultural dynamism bringing advantages in global competition over structurally disadvantaged urban and rural areas. We therefore favour the obligation of providing mutual assistance in solidarity to all parts of Germany – East and West, North and South. The specific situation in eastern Germany requires specific efforts and all-German solidarity. Federal, state and local governments must remain financially efficient. One task of the welfare state is to establish an effective financial balance. Our guiding principle is equality of living conditions. Each community and each federal state has its own strengths, which we want to support.

### **Security in freedom**

A free and open society is based on reliable respect for rules and social cohesion. Wherever this does not apply any more both freedom and security are lost. Security is a basic public asset. For political freedom and participation to blossom people must have a chance to live without fear of coercion and crime.

The constitutional state ties all exercise of power to law and order. This bond alone legitimizes the enforcement of legal order. The state holds the monopoly of power. We reject all efforts to transfer the state's obligation for citizens' protection to private institutions or even offer security for sale, just like any other commodity.

The security of our country is threatened from inside and outside: by crime, extremism and terrorism. We consistently combat this threat with the means of a democratic constitutional state. Domestic security is the task of the police forces of the Federal Government and federal states. There is an absolute prohibition of arbitrariness and torture. The constitutional state based on freedom has to guarantee its principles. This is the supreme rule for the mental rejection of extremism and terrorism.

Rightwing extremists jeopardize our freedom and our democracy. Social democrats offer adamant resistance to ideology and the violence of rightwing extremism. Extremism, racism and anti-Semitism have no place in our society.

Religiously motivated extremism must be challenged with the same resolve. Human rights cannot be seen in relative terms, even with reference to religious rules, rites or traditions. Tolerance of other cultures and traditions finds its limits where human rights are violated. Oppression, violence, rejection of self-determination, enforced marriage, enforced prostitution or 'honour killings' of women must be prevented and persecuted by all legal means. Women and girls concerned must receive social assistance and legal support.

People have a deep need for comprehensive security. This includes human attention, a sense of security and recognition. This demand grows when people face changes that they cannot control and that threaten their existence, devaluing their knowledge or questioning their sense of values. Family and neighbourhood, the entire network of social relations in clubs, trade unions, communities of faith and conviction, organizations of civic commitment and relief organizations, represent precious social conditions for a personal sense of security. Since such a network contributes something the state and government themselves cannot provide we have an extraordinary interest in the freedom and vitality of human relations and organizations of civil society.

### **Integration and immigration**

Germany is a country open to immigration. Immigrants have enormously enriched our country both in economic and cultural terms. In the era of globalization and demographic change, the task of opening our country for people from very different countries and cultures becomes even more important. We need and want more skilled immigrants. And we want to consistently prepare our country for a future as immigration society.

Immigration requires integration. Someone who wants to settle permanently must get the same opportunities to participate in political, social, economic and cultural life. We consider immigration an agreement between the people coming to us and the society accepting them. Both sides must benefit from this and be ready for integration and tolerance. In an

immigration society it is indispensable for different cultures to approach each other instead of cutting themselves off. Integration in our understanding means: we want fair chances and clear rules.

Even those who want to live permanently in Germany do not have to deny their origins. Our Basic Law offers space for cultural variety, it safeguards freedom of religious conviction, equal rights for women and men, and it respects the rights of minorities. But it also sets clear limits which nobody must put out of effect by referring to their background or religious conviction. We totally oppose oppression, discrimination and threats with respect to women and girls. Nobody must hamper the free development of their personalities or withhold opportunities for education from them.

Education, and in particular the command of the German language, are indispensable conditions for people of different background to live with one another in our country. We are improving educational programmes and we also challenge the individual commitment of immigrants. Integration can succeed most easily if it begins in one's early childhood. Active integration policy must begin with children of immigrants.

Political participation by immigrants must be improved. We therefore advocate the fundamental possibility of having several nationalities and for the right to vote at the local level, also for foreigners who do not come from an EU state.

As country open to immigration we aim for the naturalization of people coming to us. We know this step is not the end of integration but an important stage enabling full political participation.

We want a more intense and broadly based dialogue between religions and cultures with more commitment – especially with Islam. We want to overcome concerns and the fear of physical contact and strengthen mutual respect. Germany is our common home country.

We uphold the basic right of asylum for politically persecuted persons. This entails the responsibility to offer shelter and refuge to people fleeing from violence, gender-specific, state and non-state persecution and discrimination. Persons tolerated in Germany for a long time shall get a permanent residence permit. We support a common refugee policy at the European level. This must also combat the underlying reasons why people flee their homes or are displaced.

## **Public and media**

The principle of publicity belongs to the essence of democracy. It fills freedom of opinion and information with life. Free media enable people to know the facts, form opinions, participate politically and monitor power.

The media are experiencing rapid technical development. Together with newspapers, books, television and radio, computers, Internet and mobile telephones are playing a growing role. The different types of media are growing together, and strongly influencing all realms of our everyday life.

We must learn to cope with this. We want to make media competence a focal area of education. We want to use opportunities to improve political participation in freedom and access to knowledge by the new media.

We strengthen the quality, transparency and variety of the media. We combat manipulation, political bias and threats to youth. At the national, European and global levels, our media policy protects freedom of opinion and information. We defend political independence of the media from state and powerful economic interests. In our understanding, the dual broadcasting structure and public broadcasting are irreplaceable elements of a democratic public. At the same time however, we demand effective self-regulation of the media and respect for journalistic and ethical standards.

It is a basic right of citizens to be able to decide what happens to their own data. The progress of information technology is perforating this right more and more. Better media competence may contribute to better assessment of the implications when personal data are voluntarily released. The protection of person-related data remains essential in many areas of life.

### **The culture of a democratic society**

From its origins social democracy was always a cultural movement as well. We are in the tradition of a broad notion of culture. It reaches beyond the arts and also includes cultural education, historical heritage and various forms of our living together. We need a political culture supporting our democracy.

In a specific way culture is the space where society ascertains its concepts of values and its aims. It strengthens people, creates belonging, the awareness of being rooted and thus contributes to social cohesion.

Cultural issues play an important part within society and also in the conflicts and hazards of world politics. For the sake of domestic and external peace we therefore favour dialogues between cultures as an important momentum for the social integration of people with different ethnic backgrounds, religious convictions and cultural orientations. Cultural understanding is a crucial task of peaceful globalization. It aims at a culture of recognition, counteracting both the development of parallel societies and the exclusion of social minorities. We want cultural variety instead of fundamentalist narrowness and the politicization of religious and cultural differences.

Peaceful diversity will only be possible if we safeguard our mental roots in Judeo-Christian tradition, humanism and the Enlightenment. Only such a value-based and tolerant culture can withstand attempts to misuse culture and religion as reasons for exclusion.

Culture is a public good. It is the task of civil society and the state to promote it. Private civic commitment is needed. We welcome and support it. Yet, the state has responsibility that cannot be delegated. We believe in Germany as a state of culture. It safeguards the diversity of the cultural scene, cultural education and it nurtures our heritage and culture of remembrance. It promotes the arts and takes responsibility for social secu-

rity of freelance artists. It campaigns for our culture abroad. Creative potential – from artistic freedom to a growing cultural scene – will become even more important in the coming decades when innovations decide upon the future. The future of our knowledge society is also a cultural challenge.

### **Churches and communities of faith and conviction**

We profess the Judeo-Christian and humanist heritage of Europe and tolerance in issues of religious conviction. We defend freedom of thought, conscience, faith and proclamation.

In a multi-faceted society of various religions and worldviews the respect of people of other beliefs must stand the test. The foundation for our society with its freedom of religion is the constitutional state based on freedom and democracy.

In our opinion, the specific commitment of churches and religious and non-confessional communities is irreplaceable. This applies in particular to imparting democratic values and social responsibility for public welfare. We want to talk with those organizations and cooperate with them in free partnership on joint projects. We respect their right to organize their internal affairs autonomously.

## **4.4 Gender equality**

The social democrats aim for a society where men and women live together in freedom, equality and solidarity.

Since the 19th century, the SPD has demanded equal rights for women and realized them step by step, from the right to vote to equal rights in marriage and the family, and regarding access to educational institutions. It has become clear that equal rights by themselves do not bring equal treatment but that the traditional division of labour between men and women must be overcome. Rigidly fixing roles is a disadvantage for both men and women.

The SPD has taken the lead. It has created equal educational opportunities for girls and for women and it has enforced better participation in democratic parties, in parliaments and governments. It has blazed a trail for other parties and institutions as well.

Women still receive lower wages than men, yet they have fewer opportunities in working life and worse chances of promotion. . Women bear the main burden of trying to harmonize work and a family.

We want a society with equal rights and opportunities for all people: regarding access to education, training, jobs and a career, voluntary work and political activity - independent of gender, sexual identity, social and ethnic background, or religious affiliation.

We want to make sure that men and women can combine paid work and home-making, child-raising and social commitment.

We want to make sure that young women can carry out their own ideas about how they want to live. They want both work and a family. Men also want to be educators and companions for their children. Society must enable this model of partnership in shared family work and occupational life.

Paid work to make a living, equal access to jobs and a career, equal pay, parent-friendly working times, and reliable all-day educational programmes for children of all age groups – all these are basic conditions for this partnership.

If women cannot provide for themselves on their income this does not overcome rigid role models - rather it consolidates them, preventing equality through their lives and into old age.

We want to make sure that all governments and administrations review what they are planning, deciding and implementing in the light of its impact on the life of women, men and children and if necessary, make corrections. This is the principle of gender mainstreaming.

Reforming our society to become a society of equal opportunities for men and women affects all spheres of life, from the family to the world of work, from education and culture to democratic participation, from domestic to foreign policy and development aid. It even comprises all areas of law insofar as it inhibits equality.

Those who want a humane society, those who want a life in partnership must give equality of opportunity to men and women here and now.

## 4.5 New value added and good work

Social democratic economic policy follows three main goals. We want a high level of wealth fairly shared by all people. Every woman and man shall get the opportunity to make their own living by working. At the same time we must safeguard our life support systems on a sustainable basis.

These goals can only be achieved by means of high economic value added and international competitiveness. We affirm technological progress. We want to shape technology for humane, socially fair and sustainable development. New technologies are creating new markets sparking off economic growth and mobilizing forces in our society. We understand globalization as an opportunity for new jobs and sustained wealth in decades to come. Hence we need a structural framework for competition supporting long-term growth instead of focusing on short-term profit.

### **We are renewing the social market economy**

SPD and trade unions have strongly shaped the social market economy as a successful structural model. It is a model of outstanding economic achievements in the 20th century. The social market economy has combined social peace, economic strength and wealth for broad strata of socie-

ty. It has transformed participation and codetermination by the workforce into a productive force. It has maintained and strengthened social cohesion.

Yet we also know that we must modernize the social market economy in order to preserve it. Globalization of commodity, finance and service markets, changes in the world of labour and digitization put proven structural models to the test. Social democratic economic policy must shape change in the spirit of social justice. We want to consolidate the basic pillars of our economic and social model for the 21st century. We can only achieve this hand in hand with Europe and the European Union. A realistic guide to further developing the social market economy must recognize efficiency and rationality of decentralized market decisions as much as their limitations. The following principle still applies: as much market as possible and as little political regulation as necessary.

Social democratic economic policy must provide access for all to opportunities of globalization. This cannot be achieved by a race to the bottom with ever cheaper products and profits that can only be made by wage cuts and lowering social standards.

### **Policy for full employment**

The economy is meant to serve the people. The creation of more and better jobs is a yardstick for successful economic policy. Integrating everyone into the labour market is the aim of social democratic economic and social policy. Under the conditions of the 21st century, full employment no longer means the unarticulated guarantee that everyone has a safe job in the same company for life. The growing economic dynamic requires people to change their workplace and even occupation, and above all to keep on learning. Phases of child-raising or care for elderly family members often require working restrictions or even time-out from paid work. Forms of self-employment will become more and more common.

In this understanding, we will not give up the target of full employment in Germany even after decades of high unemployment. Work will not run out, on the contrary. Our future lies in innovative, up-market goods and more opportunities and jobs in the service sector. The more people are in work the greater our wealth. We want to use our potential, especially in view of demographic developments. The employment share of older workers and people with low skills must increase considerably. All jobs, even simple service activities, deserve respect and acknowledgement, and must offer the chance of moving into work requiring training.

A full-employment policy is based on four main pillars: first, high growth, a lead in marketable products and a specific employment trend in the service sector leading to a much higher supply of jobs. Second, by means of a coordinated labour market, education, equality and family policy, the preventive social welfare state supports people in coping with transitions and interruptions in their employment histories, which helps them to maintain their employability. Third, specific programmes of publicly supported and socially oriented work are needed for people who do not have any prospects on the first labour market. Fourth, we need a modern wor-



king time policy promoting self-determination and flexibility, bringing employment for more people by reducing working hours.

We want to clearly raise women's share in paid work. Young men and women need the same opportunities to overcome the former separation between typical male and female occupations by means of a broader choice of study courses and careers. We need binding targets for equal participation of women in leading positions in companies, administration, academia, research and in supervisory bodies.

### **Future markets need policy-making**

In the course of globalization, the gross world product will almost double by 2030. So the German economy has excellent chances if we can make good use of the forthcoming surge in growth, supplying new markets throughout the world with attractive goods, products and services. We must therefore set our sights on better ideas, innovation and specialization in all areas. Policy-makers, companies and employees must think internationally in a more comprehensive sense. We cannot opt out of globalization, as some left or rightwing populists try to delude us into thinking. And the course propagated by market liberals and conservatives in Germany will also lead us astray: social cutbacks, attacks on collective bargaining, and large-scale increases in working hours are wrong approaches in a globalized economy. They are directed against the people, fail economically and jeopardize the domestic business cycle. We oppose a policy of resigned adaptation with a vigorous strategy of high-quality competition.

Humanity is facing major social and ecological challenges. In order to cope with them, we need high-standard innovative products and services. Due to demographic development, products and services for the older generations represent an additional field of growth. Therefore we are focusing on qualitative growth. This helps us to improve our standard of living, save resources and energy, mitigate climate change, heal diseases, improve mobility and make communication easier. New technologies will mainly operate in these future-oriented markets.

Saving the earth is not exclusively an affair of environmental, foreign, security and development policy. It is becoming the engine of economic value added. The future belongs to "green markets", enabling a momentum for global growth without destroying our natural habitats. Products and services improving our health are not only cost factors but also markets with a future.

We want to make sure that companies massively invest in these lead markets. German industry must have a leading position here.

### **A strategic and ecological industry policy**

Industry remains the backbone of our national economy. Many services, demanding and simple ones, directly depend on industry. Industrial products, however, will increasingly depend on knowledge and services.

Strategic industrial policy favours improving the qualitative lead of our economic location. Our big chance is to develop problem solutions that can be exported worldwide. Research, product development and companies must interact more closely for this purpose than in the past. We want to turn scientific discoveries, new technologies and ideas straight into products and jobs.

We generate more value added if we correlate future social tasks with the strengthening of our industry. Strategic industrial policy is also ecological industrial policy. The concept of ecological sustainability is no obstacle to growth – it will drive growth.

The state does not seek to substitute for markets but to give them a structural social framework. As “pioneer” of economic activity it can give decisive impulses. It must set priorities in industrial policy and focus on strategic fields in partnership with business and research. The state must concentrate its funds and tools – from research to focused legislation and procurement of specific products. Such a strategic and ecological industrial policy is a cross-sectoral task in numerous fields of politics. It strengthens industrial cores and regional economic clusters. Even cores of growth in the eastern states are showing how knowledge generates new business. We are strengthening these clusters as engines for a new structure of industry in eastern Germany.

### **Modern services policy**

Not all jobs in Germany face international competition in the same way. Services for people in education and health, local crafts and trades, private households and social services offer major potential for employment. In order to exploit this potential we need more public and private demand for such services. Higher levels of employment of men and women will also increase demand.

We want to strengthen high-standard services. Specifically against the backdrop of demographic change, additional investments are needed in care and health services. Even simple services must become more attractive. We therefore support a higher share of fiscal funding for social insurance systems. In return, non-wage labour costs must be reduced in lower income brackets.

### **Growth and stability**

Our national economy needs stable and growth-friendly conditions for companies and consumers. The finance and monetary policy in Germany and Europe must therefore consolidate the business cycle and promote persistent strong growth. The state must contribute to overcoming crises of the business cycle by means of national and international stabilization policies. High domestic demand is a precondition for more employment. We support wage increases based on productivity. In lower income brackets we need minimum wages. Sustainable growth development requires a consistently increasing share of public investment.

## Sound state finances and future public investments

In our opinion, budget and finance policy is structural policy. Sound public finances are a precondition for growth, wealth and jobs. The reverse is also true. Sound state finances are also a commitment to future generations. Nevertheless, consolidating public budgets must not mean handing on neglected public infrastructures to future generations.

We want to reduce the indebtedness of public budgets and gear state expenditures more to investment in the future. For innovative and competitive business we need much more investment in education, research and infrastructure. Since all parties involved benefit from such investment companies and wealthy private households must also participate in state-financed projects in keeping with their capacity. Public-private partnerships may be useful tools to carry out necessary work on public infrastructure.

Public budgets are structurally underfinanced, depending too much on the business cycle. The state needs a more reliable income with a lower degree of fluctuation. Such income and savings will gradually provide financial and political room for action both for tasks of the state and necessary future investments.

Well-balanced distribution of income is not only fair in social terms, it is also reasonable in economic terms. We hold to the goal of performance-based taxation.

We want to change the ratio between low taxes and high social contributions in Germany. Social security systems must be financed more through taxes on all types of income rather than contributions from employers and employees subject to social insurance. As a result labour costs will fall and all tax-payers will contribute their share to social equilibration. We want to eliminate tax regulations detrimental to a stronger participation of women in paid work.

## Knowledge and skills as productive forces

Inventiveness, good ideas and innovations deriving from them are the most important raw materials of our country. With the transition from the industrial society to the industrial service- and knowledge-based society the role of skilled employees is being upgraded. In future, value added will mainly depend on participation by the workforce, including older generations, and on investments in the development of their skills. More than in the past, companies and entrepreneurs must promote human skills in their own interest. It is a common central task of companies, trade unions and politicians to satisfy the growing demand for skilled workers.

Knowledge and ideas are guarantors of our jobs. This intellectual property must be protected because product and brand piracy not only harms our own economy and innovative strength but frequently also represents a risk for consumers. We want to safeguard intellectual property and copyrights.

In the industrial service- and knowledge-based society, creative business will grow in importance. In our opinion, the recipe for more innovation, creativity and value added is the right combination of technology, talent and tolerance. We must create an atmosphere of openness in Germany for new ideas and influence by unconventional thinkers. Consistently promoting creativity in our opinion means enabling access to and use of new technologies.

### **Economic democracy and social participation**

Responsible ecological and social economic activity requires economic democracy, social participation and a conducive political framework. Economic democracy fulfils the requirement of the Basic Law: "property entails obligations". Its use shall also serve public welfare.

Codetermination at shop floor level and in companies, autonomy in collective bargaining and the right to strike are indispensable elements of a social market economy. Participation and shop-floor democracy do not impede entrepreneurial success, they are a precondition for it. In a more and more Europeanized national economy our common goal is to safeguard and improve workers' rights and codetermination at the European level. We are specifically in favour of parity co-determination between capital and employees in supervisory boards of large companies. We need to strengthen and improve the work of European works councils.

Strong and responsible trade unions are necessary for economic democracy. They are the strongest force caring for democratic participation in economic life and for a balance of various interests in relationships between social partners. We shall maintain the time-honoured system of working conditions shaped by the legislator, parties to a collective agreement, and works and personnel councils. The same applies to unrestricted autonomy in collective bargaining and rights for the protection of workers against assaults.

Participation of the workforce in company capital as an additional pillar of income promotes innovation and productivity, and grants them a fair share in the success of their company. We want to make such models more attractive. However, entrepreneurial risk must not be transferred to employees.

### **Self-employment and responsible entrepreneurship**

In Germany we need a culture of self-employment. In new enterprises additional jobs are mainly created by people accepting economic risks with their ideas. Creativity and entrepreneurship are indispensable productive forces. They are apparent in a lively innovative sphere of small and medium-sized enterprises in our country. We want to improve conditions for start-ups as well as small and medium sized enterprises, tradespeople and self-employed professionals, especially in a difficult competitive environment.

Entrepreneurial freedom and social responsibility are two sides of the same coin. Responsible entrepreneurs discovering market opportunities,

sharing their success with their workforce and sustainably investing in their future meet with our support. It is the task of economic policy, by means of fair framework conditions for competition and a long-term business culture, to enable responsible entrepreneurship.

### **Capital and finance markets: using opportunities, controlling risks**

Stable and well-functioning finance markets are indispensable for the modern globally integrated German national economy because this is where necessary capital for companies is made available. Apart from that, the sector of financial services in Germany numbers among the biggest employers. We want to exploit opportunities and potentials of commodity and capital markets for sustained economic growth, widespread wealth and employment. It is crucial to create improved access to risk capital, in particular for young innovative companies.

When finance markets generate exaggerated short-term profits, long-term growth-oriented strategies of companies are jeopardized and thus jobs are destroyed. We must avoid national economic crises and the shifting of follow-up costs to society at large. The goal of social democratic economic policy is to make sure that finance markets serve an economic culture for the long term. We want to strengthen investors focusing on long-term commitment instead of quick profit. We want to establish shareholders' right to vote in this sense. This is a central structural task for the leading industrialized countries in the world.

With the increasing interlinkage of commodity and financial markets, international regulation and safeguards for stable finance markets become more and more important. Stable national and international finance markets are crucial public assets. To achieve this we want to act jointly with other states and institutions. Our aim is not only to promote growth, wealth and employment but also to introduce efficient control and rules avoiding incalculable risks for stability and harmful erroneous developments for national economies.

Small and medium-sized enterprises depend on small-scale banks and savings banks. Therefore we want to maintain their specific role. Numerous banks in Germany, in particular savings banks and cooperative banks, are characterized by long-term company financing and their orientation towards the common good. We will not abandon this precious cornerstone of our competitiveness.

### **Competition needs rules**

Government and the business community share responsibility for sustainable and stable growth in a social market economy. But markets need fair rules for them to function. This regulatory framework can only be provided by the state. We know that in globalized areas of the economy this is only possible in an European context. We have therefore transferred responsibilities in economic and finance policy to the European Union. And for this reason we support close economic and finance coordination among EU member states.

For market mechanisms to function properly we also need efficient competition policy. It must prevent the development and concentration of excessive economic power – at least at the European level.

### **Consumers and responsibility**

Responsible consumers represent a democratic civil society in solidarity. Active consumer policy strengthens demand. Everyone exerts influence with every purchase. Individuals may be weak but organized power of consumers is an efficient way of pointing economic development in a more sustainable direction. Consumers prepared to buy high-quality commodities are pioneers of new markets for innovative products.

We want to highlight conditions under which products are manufactured and services rendered, in particular on global markets. Labelling enables conscious consumer demand. If there are improved rights of information and rules of transparency for emancipated consumers this will enable them to influence and monitor markets. Independent consumer information and reliable quality criteria must offer security. The public sector must be a model in terms of procurement and investment decisions. Comprehensive consumer information enables people to find their way in highly complex markets and to take responsible decisions on what they purchase.

This is also true for the growing market of financial services. More and more people will invest capital to fund personal old age care. We want to harmonize this with sustainable long-term economic policy.

## **4.6 The preventive welfare state**

The welfare state (Sozialstaat) is a great achievement of civilization in the 20th century. From a social democratic perspective, democracy and social welfare belong together. The welfare state complements civil rights and freedoms by the social rights of citizens. Wealth and economic dynamism, social security and social cohesion became possible because of the welfare state, not in spite of it. The welfare state makes its own productive contribution to the social participation of all people as well as to wealth and its fair distribution. The welfare state is organized in solidarity. In a community of solidarity the young stand by the old, the healthy by the sick, the non-disabled by the disabled and the employed by the unemployed. Social security and participation guaranteed by the state, the actionable statutory right to social benefits and the legally safeguarded position of the workforce will remain in the focus of Germany's welfare state.

A central issue in the 21st century, too, will be how wealth is distributed in society and what opportunities individuals have to participate in it. The position of radical market representatives, according to which inequality fosters economic progress, is not only inhumane - it is wrong. Only a society adopting a model of wealth and participation for all is fit for the future. In view of diverse lifestyles and specifically flexible types of work, the central function of the welfare state is gaining importance in order to

guarantee security in change. Only if people know that their elementary risks in life are covered with a sufficient degree of reliability will they be prepared to accept risks and become mobile. In order to renew this promise of security we are continuing to transform the state into a 'preventive' welfare state.

### **New role model**

The role model for our social policy in the 21st century is the preventive welfare state. It enables people to take charge of their own lives by focusing on activating, preventive and investment targets. It promotes earning a living, it assists in education, fosters preventive health care and prevents poverty. It shapes demographic change and conceives education as a central element of social policy. It promotes higher rates of women and older people in employment. It prevents exclusion and eases vocational integration. It does not lessen people's responsibility for their own lives.

Preventive social policy investing in people contributes to the financial stabilization of social security systems. At the same time, the preventive welfare state is instrumental in protecting us from major risks in life, such as unemployment, health or need for care, and it guarantees old age care. In view of changing employment and work histories we want to change our social security systems to guarantee security for the various phases of work and life. The more successful the preventive care, the more focused the assistance of the welfare state to those requiring specific support. The preventive welfare state overcomes the usual compartmentalization of services.

In our opinion, the social integration of all people in society is the supreme task of the preventive welfare state. Hence many fields of policy need to be interlinked and preventive care organized in good time. This was realized back in 1989 with the Berlin Programme: "Social policy not only seeks to repair and help out in emergencies, it aims to forestall them." Thus integral parts of the welfare state are economic and finance policy, education, equal rights and family policy, preventive social policies in municipalities, fair regulation of labour as well as a modern policy of integration and immigration. The results of individual policies depend on how well we are able to combine and intertwine them with one another.

### **Emancipation, participation and security**

The preventive welfare state pursues the three central aims of emancipation, participation and security.

**Emancipation** is a precondition for self-determination in the lives of all citizens. People want to organize their lives themselves. Relieving them of constraints deriving from their background and old-fashioned ideas was the great promise of the Enlightenment and has always been the central aim of Social Democracy.

**Participation** in the social goods of education, a safe livelihood through work and health must be open to all people, from the start and later in life, independently of social background, age or gender. This applies in par-

ticular to people who are not able to care for themselves, like the unemployed, the sick, people needing special care, the elderly, people with disabilities and even those who are providing care and raising children themselves.

**Security** does not only mean protecting people from economic hardship, from elementary risks in life and discrimination. Security also creates necessary preconditions for self-determining one's own life. The foundations of security are not only work, material goods and legal claims but also individually acquired cultural and social competence.

To reach these aims in our time the preventive social welfare state must focus more on the status of citizens and less on the status of gainful employment. We will promote participation of people as early as possible in their lives and place education and child-raising at the centre of our action. This requires better qualifications, and support and social esteem for those working in public institutions like child daycare centres, schools and day centres giving nursing care.

We need more and better social services and institutions. They can be provided by the state, by welfare associations, and also by private initiative. General standards set by the state guarantee quality as well as free and equal access for all.

Justice and solidarity are the funding principles of our welfare state. One-sidedly burdening working people in funding tasks of the entire society is neither socially fair nor economically sound. In future, social insurance schemes funded by equal contributions from workers and employers will remain the central pillar of our welfare state. We want to strengthen the funding basis of social security systems and complement contributions funded in parity by higher and sustained tax-based funding. In so doing we abide by the following rule: the share of contributions must be lowered and the share of taxes increased in order to enable a fairer, more productive and sustainable welfare state.

The claim for participation and the right of self-determination exist independently of gender, age or disability. Persons with disabilities require the support and solidarity of all. We want fair participation in all areas of social life. The prerequisite for this is the absence of barriers in all areas of life to make sure that persons with disabling conditions can take charge of their own lives. Strong public commitment is also needed so that children and adolescents with special needs in public institutions receive early support and can later integrate into the regular labour market.

### **Good work: flexibility needs security**

The world of work is changing. Flexibility, mobility and social risks have gained enormously in importance. And yet, social security and legal protection must also be guaranteed in future. Flexibility requires security. Flexibility must not lead to precarious employment contracts. Equal work must be given equal pay – this applies in particular to work performed by women. Working in dignity means: fair and good working conditions, health and safety at work and effective protection from discrimination and sexual harassment. In our opinion, freedom of collective bargaining and



general collective agreements remain basic mechanisms for bargaining and shaping labour relations. Protection against unlawful dismissal protects working people from arbitrariness.

We want to improve the opportunities for social advancement, strengthen the permeability of the working society and support people's readiness to achieve. Enterprise must be encouraged and it must also pay off.

Higher employment rates for women and also older people can contribute to avoiding exclusion and facilitating occupational integration. This improves chances for participation and the basis for fiscal and social insurance revenue. Increasing wealth due to rising productivity and GDP will contribute to coping with the demographic challenges facing social security systems.

Men and women in partnership must have an equal chance of participating in paid work, having a career, and sharing other forms of activity like family or community work.

In our opinion, working time policy and structuring working time are very important. They are meaningful for society because they influence participation in the life of society, i.e. in cultural, social and voluntary activities. The working time policy of the future must take account of the justified interests of companies like strengthening innovation and competitiveness. By the same token, future working time policy must correspond to the needs of working people for more time autonomy, skill development opportunities and a work-life balance. Working time accounts are an important tool for attuning the interests of employers and employees. They require sufficient protection from insolvency, however, and a legally binding option to transfer them in case of choosing another workplace.

We want to make sure that working time can be adapted to various phases in life. This really contributes to a work-life balance. We want a humane design of work-time patterns and working conditions to protect people from stress from work that is both long and more intense. We want to promote work-time models enabling mothers and fathers alike to perform their child-raising duties.

Our aim is to prevent unemployment from the beginning. This requires more security for transitions between various phases in life. In parallel, it is of utmost importance to maintain and develop individual working ability and skills. This is why we want an active labour market policy promoting the preservation of employability by skill development. An essential tool of such an activating policy is to transform unemployment insurance into employment insurance in order to establish a new culture of further training. With the introduction of employment insurance we want to put the focus on maintaining employability and continuing upskilling of the workforce. This includes a legal claim to further training, combining services for skill development and establishing central learning time accounts.

A social issue of central importance is the integration of people without vocational qualifications on the labour market. People without a chance on the first labour market need a publicly funded, community-oriented

labour market offering employment subject to social insurance, i.e. regular jobs.

Active labour market policy cannot substitute for employment policy. Without more growth we cannot considerably lower unemployment on a long-term basis. In this sense, social democratic policy for growth and employment must coordinate all programmes launched under economic, structural, finance and labour market policy.

## Healthy lifestyle

Social democratic health policy begins with avoiding diseases and maintaining health but also promotes healing, rehabilitation, a dignified life with incurable disease and humane care at the end of life. In case of disease it also guarantees an equal right to care for all citizens independent of background, age and gender, and guarantees everyone benefit from medical progress. It is the responsibility of a socially committed health service to safeguard equal health care for all.

We want to introduce a citizens' insurance scheme in the health sector. All citizens are to be insured and contribute to funding the health system in keeping with their capacities. Independent of their employment status they are to become an integral part of our health system. Contributions made equally by employers and employees shall be the mainstay of our health system in future, too. A growing and safe share of fiscal funding is needed, however, to meet the need at the macrosocial level and cover the outlays of social health insurance.

Preventive health care begins with avoiding diseases from birth. We want to strengthen the right of each child to grow up healthily, and promote health-aware behaviour and prevention. Our aim is health for all. This includes good health education from the start, obligatory medical checkups, including in daycare centres for children and at schools, as well as action to create living and working conditions that are beneficial to health.

Technical progress in medicine has brought new, more effective ways of caring for and healing sick people. This progress must be made accessible to all. The elements of a two-class medical service that we are seeing are not acceptable for a democratic society.

## Care in dignity

The principles of a citizens' insurance in solidarity should also apply to long-term care insurance. This social service must develop and adapt to changing needs. In future, our notion of care must be more strongly individualized. Care in dignity will continue to take place in the family and private setting, as well as in outpatient and inpatient facilities, and these forms should efficiently complement each other. We want to strengthen private and public initiatives since care depends on various types of commitment. People need special solidarity at life's end. Every person has the right to die in dignity.

## Safe and active in old age

In future we will have a long-life society. People are living longer and staying healthy longer. In contrast to the past, a third active phase in life with new possibilities will follow the phase of gainful employment. This offers new opportunities for our society but it also brings new challenges. We want older people to take an active and creative part in economic and social life.

It is an achievement of the welfare state that older people can structure their lives without economic hardship. For people to have an adequate income, statutory pension insurance must remain the standard source of provision for old age. In future, however, it must be supplemented by income from company pension schemes as well as voluntary privately funded pensions subsidized by the state.

In future, we want to include self-employed people and civil servants in the statutory pension insurance for employees in order to adapt the system to changing working conditions. Earned income will remain the yardstick for fixing pension levels.

The contribution-based type of pension must be complemented by the aim of avoiding poverty. We must avoid security gaps in old age due to phases in life when paid work was not possible.

The precondition for women having an independent pension in their old age is uninterrupted gainful employment with a reliable income as well as equal treatment of men and women regarding access to occupational life and a career. Where this is not guaranteed, the statutory pension will be topped up by demand-oriented basic social security (income support) to avoid poverty in old age.

## Preventive social policy in local communities

Preventive social policy of local government tackles the root causes of the need for assistance. Essential principles are “help for self-help”, “promoting and challenging”, and “prevention instead of after-care”. At the municipal level people receive targeted assistance to cope with their specific life situations. Social policy of local government must help to overcome emergencies. Self-help initiatives must be organized and supported here.

The quality of a preventive welfare state becomes mainly apparent in local practice such as in high-standard kindergartens and schools, in an attractive residential barrier-free environment for all generations and in a variety of facilities for sport and leisure.

Preventive local government policy is directed towards social areas. We consider them to be areas of action where we link up various policy programmes to maintain and promote social cohesion in municipalities. In so doing, we practise an active policy of district development. The policy of the ‘social town’ brings together issues of employment, housing, skill development, lifestyle as well as participation in social life. A central field of action is strengthening citizens’ capacity for cooperation, togetherness

and developing social networks. By promoting self-help and taking responsibility, and by providing cooperative structures and the infrastructure needed for this purpose, we want to empower people, get them involved and strengthen the community relations of the different social and ethnic groups.

Social democratic policy supports such commitment by local governments, therefore we back affordable housing and we protect tenants' rights.

## 4.7 Education in the learning society

Education is decisive for our future. It is the greatest social issue of our time. Education opens opportunities for each individual. It enables people to set goals for themselves and to realize dreams. It offers access to a world of change. It empowers people for democracy and social responsibility. It offers the chance to work, increasing social security from youth to old age. It is primarily education that ensures participation and prospects of social advancement. Education is the key to a free, peaceful, fair and democratic society. It is a productive force of rapidly growing economic importance. Only societies with an open, socially permeable and highly developed educational system will prosper in the global knowledge society.

From the beginning, our educational system must focus on equal opportunities for boys and girls and the integration of immigrants.

Knowledge is increasing at breathtaking speed. Knowledge once acquired is quickly outdated. Good education is an ongoing project. People learn for life, indeed their whole life long. No individual can gather all available knowledge in his or her own person. Together with others, however, we can harvest maximum benefit for all from progress in knowledge. We want to impart joy in learning and openness for research achievements.

We want holistic education. It aims at theoretical knowledge, social competence and content useful for occupational life. To no lesser extent it also comprises aesthetic experience, ethical reflection and the imparting of values. To strengthen our open society we must appreciate political education and education for democracy. Comprehensive cultural and social education strengthens personality. Strong personalities are capable of tolerance and respect for other cultures.

### Education for all

We want free access to information, education and knowledge. A fair society must provide equal opportunities. We must overcome all forms of exclusion due to a lack of access to education. From education in early childhood to the first vocational qualification we must pave the way for parents and children and remove financial hurdles. Every person has the right to free education from kindergarten to university.

The state has the task to provide for equal access to education without regard for social background. Public expenditure on education must rise.

It must keep pace with the growing importance of education. Spending on education must be recognized as an investment. Investment in people must become a priority.

We need a culture of second and third chances. Someone ending in a bottleneck in the course of life must have the possibility of acquiring school graduations free of charge and acquiring vocational graduations at a later stage.

We need better and more broadly based education. We are combating illiteracy. Everyone must get the opportunity to use modern media. We are avoiding digital divides in society by offering training in handling computers and the internet in all areas of education and further training. Girls and women must have equal access to these opportunities. Better media competence is the condition for fully aware and critical use of media.

People imparting knowledge and values at daycare centres for children, schools, vocational training centres and universities contribute work of utmost importance for our society. Educators, teachers and university lecturers bear a great responsibility. They deserve more recognition and support. We want to strengthen these professions. We must see to a more balanced representation of women and men in the teaching staff, from kindergarten to university. This is the only way to provide boys and girls with role models. Education and training must be improved.

Parents play a decisive role in the development of children and adolescents. We want to support them in this task. If parents are not able to guarantee sufficient development for their children, the educational system and vigilant children and youth care must undertake all efforts to enable each child to enjoy equal chances of education.

### **Education from day one**

In our opinion, support for children begins with targeted support for parents and pregnant women. The first weeks and years of life are crucial. Side by side with parents, doctors, midwives and nurses are the first to promote a child's wellbeing and development. We want to prepare them well for this task.

Daycare facilities for children are an indispensable link in the educational chain. They can balance out disadvantage stemming from the child's background early on. We want to strengthen education and child-raising at pre-school institutions. We want to transform daycare facilities for children into parent-child centres. Families will find good advice there as well as reliable assistance for every-day life and further education. Training for kindergarten teachers will concentrate more on education in early childhood. Special attention must be dedicated to language learning, the healthy development of every child and equal treatment of boys and girls.

The social democrats have successfully struggled for the abolition of school fees. Now we are demanding cost-free all-day care for all children. From the age of two there should be a legal right to childcare.

## Learning together

We want to see the expansion of all-day schools. In all-day schools children find regular times for study and classwork. There are also times for social learning and human experience. School becomes a centre in the lives of children and adolescents.

All-day schools have social anchors. They involve sports clubs, music schools, adult education classes, enterprises in the neighbourhood as well as youth work organised by the voluntary sector. At all-day schools we want to create more possibilities for personally tailored pupil support. This will enable us to discover and develop their strengths. Schools and centres open all day also take the weight off parents.

We want to link longer learning in mixed classes with better individual support. Experience from other countries shows that both children with learning difficulties and fast learners can reach higher levels of competence when taught together. We want a school system that can break down the correlation between educational opportunities and social background.

We want the schools to work more independently. They receive binding standards and their efficiency is checked regularly. On the other hand, they are to be enabled to develop much more creativity and competence. This includes selection of staff and reliable school budgets. Our vision is a democratic school where teachers, learners and their parents are involved in decision-making.

## Modernizing vocational training

Initial vocational training is an important foundation for occupational activity and for life-long vocational learning. This is why it must also impart cross-sectoral skills. We want to give all adolescents opportunities to obtain training qualifications enabling them to take part in the world of work and to manage their own lives.

We want to further develop the 'dual system' of training and placements. It must be modernized in such a way that it can keep pace with the rapid developments in the world of employment. The dual system must be rooted more strongly in the new sectors of industry. We need good interaction between businesses and schools and committed support for start-ups. Students with learning difficulties need personalized assistance. Companies have the duty to provide training places for the up-and-coming skilled workers. Funding models based on solidarity may be useful in assisting them. Supplementary vocational training at school must lead to school leaving certificates of equal value.

Schools and enterprises must cooperate well. It is much easier for adolescents to make the break from a regular school to vocational training if they get used to the idea of working life while still at school. Girls and women are to take their own decisions on their future careers. Traditional role patterns must be broken down.

When it comes to selecting study courses and a career we want to make sure that women are familiarized with fields of science and technology in the same way as men. We must also help boys to abandon their old role fixation and to perform better at secondary school.

### **Strengthening university studies and research**

Society and industry need more and more highly skilled staff. For this reason, far more people must gain a third-level degree in Germany. We want to improve the quality of teaching and research and increase the number of places at our universities. We uphold the responsibility of the state for universities. It has the task of safeguarding their funding.

Universities are to be largely autonomous. We want to enable the codecision of all taking part in life at university.

Research and teaching form a unit. Universities taken together must offer the full range of teaching and research. Social sciences and humanities must be promoted as much as natural sciences and engineering. Universities and research institutions must cooperate closely.

We want open access to university studies. We want to increase the share of students from families with little education. Determination and talent should count, not social background. To guarantee fair competition between federal states and to provide incentives for more university places we support financial adjustment among the states.

It must also be possible for people with vocational qualifications to take university courses. The state supports third-level study by means of grants, loans and scholarships.

We want to increase the international experience of students and see this reflected in student grants. At the same time, our country is to be open to and attractive for students from other countries. This requires abolishing bureaucratic barriers to access. To attract the best minds we need scholarships for talented students from abroad.

### **Further education in a learning society**

We want a learning society where people have a chance to develop throughout all their lives. Further education is to become the fourth column of our education system enabling advancement by education for all. This fourth column also bears public responsibility. For committed further education we want to support people by means of financial assistance and the right to take time out. This includes considering the specific interests of mothers and fathers. To achieve this we need joint solutions from policy-makers, partners in collective bargaining and enterprises. We will transform the existing unemployment insurance into employment insurance, making contributions to funding further education and training. We want to make further training in professional fields a separate undertaking in universities. To make sure that individual acceptance of lifelong learning does not fail because of financial hurdles we need to restructure and expand the promotion of state-run education and training.

Participating in lifelong learning not only maintains employability, it is a core element of fulfilled personal and social life. In addition to work-related training, continuing education in general, political and cultural fields plays an important role. Adult education classes should come to the fore again in this context.

Further education and training enable older people to stay active at work and in society. We want to increase their participation in further education and training. This safeguards the innovative strength of a long-life society. We want to make sure that learning and education enrich relations between generations in the third phase of life.

## 4.8 Strengthening children and families

Children personify happy future prospects. They are the foundation of each society. We want a society offering the best conditions for families with children together with an atmosphere of openness and acceptance for children's needs. In the family people find love, security and stability, orientation and mutual support.

Successful child and family policy is the key to the future of our country – in social, economic and political terms. The reasons for the consistently low birth rate in Germany, among other factors, are outdated role models and political failures. Child and family policy must be shifted from the margins to the focus of our attention. We need a child and family policy that can function across the boundaries of government departments and competences.

Only a society friendly to children can be dynamic and growth-oriented. We must make sure that everyone gets the opportunity to realize their life plans. We therefore favour a policy making it easier for young women and men to fulfil their wish to have children without jeopardizing their career aspirations and prospects. This particularly applies to parents who want to have more than one child. In the phase of founding one's own family young people need more financial assistance and also more support from society and employers.

We want to substantively improve general policy conditions enabling young women and men to decide in favour of children. This requires targeted support in every phase of life including training and starting a new job. When people want three or more children, they should not have to forgo this wish because of financial constraints. It represents a massive restriction on individual freedom and opportunities in life if many men and women remain without children for lack of compatibility between a family and work.

The world of employment must consider the needs of families. Employment conditions that over time do not enable planning and economic independence make it difficult for young people to decide in favour of children. Working conditions increasingly veering towards the ideal of the individual available at all times are an obstacle to stable interpersonal relations and social cohesion in our country. Working hours - also times for shop-floor training and in-service training - must take more account of



parents' needs. This will open up opportunities for earning a good living, equal chances of a career and reaching leading positions, and the possibility of sharing the tasks of child-raising and home-making in partnership. This will benefit both families and enterprises.

If parents separate this enhances the risk of children's impoverishment. Single parents, mostly mothers, are usually not in a position to work for lack of childcare. Financial constraints hit both mothers and fathers even more if they are living apart and have several children together. The state must make sure that single parents can go out to work by providing educational and childcare services.

We do not resign ourselves to a situation in which mainly the social background of parents later on determines the educational and income prospects of children. For this reason, family policy is a crucial component of integration policy.

Our family model reflects social reality. Most people wish to get married. We also support other options of partnership, same-sex life partnerships and single parents. Family is where children are and where partners or generations stand by one another. Everyone has a family, even people without children of their own.

Our model is a family where both mother and father are responsible for providing income and care. This is what the vast majority of young people want. It corresponds to the needs of children to have a mother and a father, and it guarantees the economic independence of families. At the same time, the achievement of single parents deserves more recognition and support.

The decision in favour of children has always been a private one. Whichever way it goes, however, this decision influences the future of our country. We therefore want to strengthen society's responsibility for children. This means: intensive professional guidance for all parents and the legal claim to all-day care from the age of two. When their children are still toddlers, in particular, parents need more support. It is hard to balance out initial faults of mothers and fathers at a later stage. Both parents have the right and also the obligation to raise their children.

The state has special responsibility for children who do not receive sufficient support in their families or even suffer violence. The right of parents finds its limits where the right of the child is violated. Children have rights of their own and we want them to be entrenched in the German constitution. If family conflicts end in violence against women or neglect of children the state and society must intervene.

## 4.9 Sustainable progress

We ground our policy in all fields on the principle of sustainability. Sustainable development creates a balance of social, ecological and economic targets. It considers the needs of future generations in today's decisions.

Energy - like air, water, and other natural resources - is fundamental to our life support system. Today's way of using energy and wasting resources does not have a future. Nature responds to human influence. The changing climate is one major global hazard. Worldwide growth in energy demand and the increasing consumption of natural resources require an urgent turnaround.

### **Technology and social responsibility**

A better life with more wealth is possible not only here and now but also for future generations worldwide. Ecological and social problems of our modern world can be resolved by the instruments of our modern world. Human knowledge and skills open up opportunities long deemed unthinkable. We can heal diseases that were incurable in the past. We can combat hunger. We can be mobile with a fraction of the propulsive power needed before. The economy can grow without destroying nature. All of this is possible if we use our abilities with determination and reason.

We promote ideas and inventiveness. We impartially check opportunities and threats of new technologies to see whether they serve the purpose of the free development, dignity, security and social cohesion of humankind. We know: technical innovation needs acceptance by society. It grows to the same extent as progress improves life and reaches all people.

Biotechnology, genetic engineering and medical progress is taking us into ethical borderline areas. Their exploration and application therefore require ethical reflection and broad-based discussion. We want such a debate with science, churches and religious communities. The dignity of human life in all its phases must not be violated. We abide by the prohibition of targeted genetic interference in human germlines.

### **Safeguarding resources, protection of the atmosphere and life support system**

The availability of resources conditions all economic activities and technological progress. Conserving the resource base is therefore a vital requirement for any community. For reasons of international cooperation and safeguarding peace, indispensable resources must be conserved in such a way that other societies are not deprived of them. This applies to energy, raw materials, water and soil fertility.

In modern societies the utilization of energy and raw materials happens by means of conversion with appropriate technologies. This incurs inevitable losses. If these resources contain hazardous substances they are released during conversion and jeopardize people's health and life support system to an increasing extent.

Since the beginning of the industrial age limited resources have been exploited more and more. Moreover, fossil energies contain hazardous substances. Increasing demand has led to a global environmental crisis jeopardizing the survival of civilization primarily in the form of climatic disasters. Nuclear energy seemed to give reason for great hope to many in view of the forthcoming post-fossil age. It cannot live up to these hopes

for many reasons known by now, such as the irresponsible risks of accidents and nuclear waste left behind for thousands of years to come. No generation must burden future generations for such long periods of time.

In our view, one key task for the 21st century is therefore to consistently realize the transition from limited to unlimited and from toxic to non-toxic resources. Our aim is the solar era.

In view of comprehensive potential developments and existing technologies this is not only possible but also offers the great chance of maintaining modern technological progress and sharing it with the whole of humanity. The precondition for this is broad-based structural change towards new decentralized forms of energy provision.

The efficiency and savings revolution can bridge the existing gap because it reduces energy consumption and avoids conversion losses. This can halve energy consumption by the year 2020 and lower it by a factor of four by mid-century. Together with a simultaneous shift to renewable energies, this will call forth a variety of new technologies and enable the creation of numerous new jobs in industry, services, trades, agriculture and forestry. It represents the most important contribution to avoiding international conflicts over resources, it contributes to economic development in the non-industrialized world and it does away with vital energy dependence making entire states subject to blackmail. Renewable energies are everywhere the largest permanently available domestic energy resources. They also enable us to reduce water consumption making it easier to cope with crises since generating and using nuclear and fossil energy requires large quantities of water.

Substituting non-renewable energies must prioritize those energies whose reserves will be exhausted earlier, such as crude oil and natural gas and those for which we depend on imports. Regarding fossil energy sources this means that we give preference to domestic coal.

We are proud to have paved the way to the solar era as a ruling party since 1998, thereby adopting a pioneer role worldwide. To accelerate this development worldwide, we support the establishment of an international government agency for renewable energies (IRENA).

We want to replace industrial raw materials by renewable ones as much as possible. This is most easily feasible with chemical raw materials and even safeguards the future of the chemical industry. Instead of minerals, unlimited substitute materials can be used to conserve resources. Focus on this technology is one of our main areas of policy. With the same intensity we are supporting the improvement of material efficiency, material productivity and recycling processes leading to material savings and waste avoidance. This also helps to avoid environmental damage. With such investment in the conservation of resources we are creating a modern cyclical economy which looks promising for small and medium-sized enterprises at the regional and local levels.

The absorptive capacity of the earth for toxic emissions has reached its limit. To restrict global warming to a bearable extent the worldwide emission of greenhouse gases must be halved by 2050.

The Kyoto Protocol is only the beginning. We support further, more ambitious agreements for the reduction of greenhouse gases. In this field, too, Germany must play a pioneer role. Developing and emerging countries need modern technologies to enter into climate-compatible energy generation and utilization, without any detour.

Through climate change, the unavoidable hazards of natural phenomena are penetrating our awareness to a growing extent. Nobody can be really safe from natural damage like floods, storms or avalanches. This is why we need more precautionary measures and planned damage protection.

### **Mobility and quality of life**

Moving freely and covering large distances in a short period of time is a great gain for many people. Our culture is inconceivable without mobility in personal everyday life or in the economic division of labour on the world market. The transport business is a carrier of growth. Logistics offers solutions for complicated tasks in commodity supply.

We promote necessary and desired mobility. It is not an end in itself, however. We want to avoid unnecessary mobility by better logistics and more intelligent residential developments. We invest in our transport and traffic infrastructure to a high degree. In so doing we apply the principle of sustainability. In terms of ecological compatibility we give priority to the best available traffic system and multi-modal transport. We want modern high-performance rail traffic. This is of major importance for Europe as it grows closer together. It safeguards quality of life in cities and regions. Short-distance public passenger transport remains a public responsibility in our opinion. Where it is lacking there is more air pollution and land cover, as experience shows in many cities outside Europe. Bus and rail travel must become more cost-efficient, but we shall still support them with public funding.

The automobile is being reinvented in our days. The old antagonism between powered individual transportation and the environment is clearly waning. This step is urgently needed in terms of changes in energy consumption and protection of the atmosphere. Higher efficiency of drive technologies and engines and the introduction of biological fuels are easing the burden on the environment. We are in favour of basing motor vehicle taxation on carbon dioxide emissions. We are determined to use the opportunities of hybrid, hydrogen and fuel cell technologies.

### **Protection of nature and animals**

We want to preserve and protect our natural heritage. This needs consistent enforcement of nature conservation and a substantial reduction of still increasing land consumption for infrastructure, business and housing. We need space for recreation and leisure. In our opinion, preserving nature in its unique variety and fascinating wealth of species is an indispensable contribution to permanently preserving quality of life for our children and grandchildren. Our ethical obligation to be a careful steward of nature also applies when this does not represent an immediate benefit for humankind. We want better protection of plants and animals. We want to learn from nature and use its forces for a better life.

For effective protection of oceans and coastal regions we need enforceable safety standards in shipping and ship building as well as a responsible and sustainable fisheries policy.

Keeping species in their natural environment must become normal in a society advocating the respectful treatment of animals. We must consistently combat cruelty to animals and prevent animal experiments wherever possible. We support the commitment of animal rights activists.

### **Development of rural areas**

Rural areas must take up the challenge of demographic change, economic progress and also ecological change. The aim of our policy for rural areas is economic strengthening of regions, maintaining and creating appropriate infrastructure and preserving cultural landscapes.

Life in rural areas is still characterized by agriculture. Rural areas have their own development opportunities like tourism or renewable raw materials closely linked to sustainable agriculture. We support regional networks of activities with the goal of promoting the regions' inherent strengths.

### **Sustainable agriculture**

Conditions for agriculture in Germany will further change. The internationalization of agro-markets continues. In the European Union we want to make sure that financial transfers for agriculture are linked to its contribution to maintaining our natural life support systems and cultural landscapes enabling sustainable development in rural areas.

New market opportunities are arising for high-quality foods, in particular from ecological production, and for renewable raw materials. We are promoting agriculture covering such growing demand and at the same time making cautious use of natural resources like soil, water and air. The cultural wealth of many nations also becomes apparent in landscapes shaped by people by means of agriculture. We want to preserve this wealth. Farmers and consumers have the right to promote cultivation without genetically modified organisms.

We want a type of agriculture where environment- and species-compatible production pays. Farmers need more economic scope for action to adapt their activities to the market. Cooperatives, new forms of cooperation within marketing chains and other classical organizations of agrobusiness are offering opportunities to improve market positions specifically compared to a strongly consolidated food retail business.

Such kind of progress is compatible with interests of future generations and nature. It is setting the tracks for long-term sustainability in our way of life and economic activity.

## 5. Our way forward

We are leading the way. We are leaving stubbornness and lamentation, denial of realities, egoism and populism to others.

**We are the party of freedom, justice and solidarity.** The unity of these three core values united in the political aim of Social Democracy distinguishes us from all other political parties and political interests. We want to win people's support in our country for the values and aims of Social Democracy.

**We are creating the Alliance for Social Democracy.** A party can only be as strong as the people sharing and supporting its values and aims. We are campaigning for a political alliance bringing together all parts of a civil society based on solidarity. We want to spread enthusiasm for our ideas among men and women, among young and old.

**We are the party of all Germany.** In our party we pool the experience of a history of 150 years, from East to West, from North to South, of women and men, old and young, from different walks of life and groupings. This is our strength. As a leftwing people's party we want to take responsibility for our entire country – at the national, regional and local levels.

**We are the party of committed citizens.** As a social movement with our many hundreds of thousands of members we ourselves are part of a civil society where citizens take responsibility for their community, thus creating lively democracy. The older generation in particular is an indispensable force of this civil society. For Social Democracy we want to win over activists in trade unions, churches, clubs, associations and non-governmental organizations. We are fighting jointly with all women and men supporting real equality. We are campaigning to get all those who want to improve our country to commit themselves for their ideas as members of the SPD.

**We are the party of labour and value added.** Social Democracy combines all productive forces of our country: the workforce, men and women managing enterprises, the self-employed in crafts, trades and the professions. We support the interests of working people and those excluded from gainful employment. Together with them we want to shape the working society of the future.

**We are the party of education, science and progress.** Knowledge means free development of people. Knowledge is a productive force of growing importance for our society. We seek an alliance with all those multiplying and imparting knowledge for the wellbeing of all people. We want progress in social responsibility.

The idea of Social Democracy also gains its strength from the stimulus of all academic disciplines.

**We are the party of culture.** The idea of Social Democracy is expressed in the work of artists, thinkers and creative persons. Together with them we want to be critical where it is needed and develop ideas for a good life.

**We are the party of international solidarity.** We adamantly support the interests of disadvantaged regions of the world. We work for peace and global justice. We support international social movements in their striving for a better world. People of all cultures and religions find their political home in Social Democracy. As a member of the Socialist International and the Party of European Socialists we are part of a strong political family with which we campaign for the idea of Social Democracy.

**We are the party of the caring centre.** Our party has hundreds of thousands of members but there are even millions of people thinking and feeling like us. Independent of their own situation in life many people want a better and fairer society. To enforce equal rights for the disadvantaged we need solidarity of those who are less dependent on support by society. The caring centre has enabled Social Market Economy and it will continue to care for cohesion in our country with its contribution and solidarity. We want to expand the caring centre in our country and win it over for Social Democracy. We want to convince the majority in our country that social justice is the real destination of humankind bringing benefit for all.

**We are looking ahead.**