

IMPULSES.

For a new policy agenda for the SPD.

The new SPD:

**Strengthening people,
Opening paths.**

Foreword

German social democracy has set off on a path to modernising its policy agenda. Within the framework of the Political Academy of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, younger members of the German parliament and those with representative functions in the Social Democratic Party (SPD) have compiled an article for this debate, which we are publishing in association with Network Berlin.

As a political foundation that orients its work completely on the basic values of social democracy, we aim to provide a workshop for ideas and a forum of discourse for programmatic policy questions in times of far-reaching social change.

The impulses presented here for a new policy statement of the SPD are based upon an intensive dialogue between academics and politicians that took place during our workshop entitled "The Future of Social Democracy" from 29 September - 4 October 2003 in the Kurt Schumacher Academy in Bad Münstereifel.

Through this publication we want to enable a broad discussion on the ways to master the main challenges of our society in the 21st century.

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Impulses. A new policy agenda for the SPD.

The times and the world we live in have changed, and will change still further. There are new challenges but also old ones that have not yet been mastered. Vast opportunities and prospects arise – for present and future generations. But there are also great risks. "The age we live in is filled with more possibilities than perhaps at any other time – for better and for worse", wrote Willy Brandt in his last address to the Socialist International.

Those who are interested in people, their future and their living together and want to actively shape this living together with others must think ahead of their time and provide orientation.

What is important to us about people living together – not only in Germany? Which principles and values should guide us and provide us with security in view of all the changes? What threatens to drive us apart, what brings us together? And what conditions do we want to create? What should be maintained as it is, and what must change so that in the future we can also live open-mindedly, independently, democratically and caringly?

We Social Democrats of the "generation after '68" have attempted to find our own answers to these questions. Answers from our generation. **Thereby we want to make our own contribution – an impulse – for recreating our Social Democratic party programme. Our text is therefore not to be understood as an essay that contains all the answers.**

We find it thrilling and exciting to seek solutions to present-day challenges. But we would find it even more exciting to consider things further together with as many people as possible within and outside the SPD as well as from all generations. **You are cordially invited to participate.**

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I. The age in which we live

For people in Germany and Europe, the 21st century holds tremendous opportunities. In particular, the younger generations were born into a world with an economic, social, environmental and cultural potential that no previous generation has ever had:

- Our country has enjoyed secure peace for 60 years now and has restored unity since 1990.
- Overcoming division and hostility on our continent enables the joint creation of peace and freedom, democracy and social well-being throughout Europe.
- We have the financial, scientific and technological means to combat famine, thirst, disease and poverty worldwide, and to provide help that leads to self-help.
- On the basis of a very successful and affluent society, in Germany we are able to realise many individual ways of living.
- Today, science and technical innovations provide the requirements for a healthier and longer life, for increased knowledge and capabilities as well as for more mobility.
- Good education, vocational training and qualifications can enable people to master the challenges of modern society and take advantage of personal opportunities.
- Global cultural exchange enriches our lives.
- Social welfare systems protect us in times of need, offer new opportunities and social security and guarantee social peace.

However, we are also living in a world with ever-increasing contradictions and challenges:

- The economy requires more flexibility and speed than ever before. But people need security and long-term perspectives.
- Global population development and the intense consumption of natural resources create great environmental risks. This environmental challenge has been known for a long time. Implementing measures that have been necessary for a long time is overdue.
- As a result of globalisation, borders lose their function of providing separation and the world economy grows together, but our ability for global political co-operation is alarmingly underdeveloped. Global markets and technologies increasingly divide the world into winners and losers – the industrial nations and the poorest societies of Africa, Asia and South America.
- Starvation, need and impoverishment are a bitter reality for half of the world's population. At the same time this creates fertile soil for the willingness for violence, religious and cultural fundamentalism, military conflicts and international terrorism.
- Privatised violence and new wars increasingly take the place of old conflicts and, since they are not caused by states, new methods are required for prevention and securing peace.

- Ethnic-cultural conflicts threaten to increase, also within Germany and Europe. They are the result of the fact that for decades there has been no active integration of immigrants.
- Democratically authorised decisions of nation states lose their effectiveness in view of the competitive conditions of the global economy and the pressure from social and technological change.
- In Germany, mass unemployment, which has been growing for the last 25 years, also leads to poverty, isolation, many people being excluded from society and to an unjust distribution of the opportunities in life.
- German unity was and is a great success for our country. The manner of the unification process however led to social hardships that could have been avoided.
- Demographic change and persistent unemployment lead to the erosion of our social welfare systems.
- The lack of adequate childcare facilities forces many people to choose between having a career or a family. Thus particularly women, who still perform the principle share of the work in the household, are excluded from working life. This diminishes the chances of an increase in the birth rate in our country.
- The realisation of educational opportunities is too dependent upon social origin. Opportunities in life are thereby distributed unfairly, talent remains idle.
- Burdening in particular workers and their families with taxes, deductions and social insurance contributions will increasingly be perceived as inefficient and anti-social.
- The high national deficit is responsible for an increasing proportion of interest charges on earned national income.

We, the Social Democrats, want to use the great opportunities at the beginning of the 21st century to master these challenges. We are certain that our generation possesses all of the requirements for this: open-mindedness, a wealth of ideas, energy and respect for others.

The Social Democrats stake everything on the capability and readiness for freedom and responsibility. We want to work together with all dedicated people in our country and throughout the world, in order to create a better world. Together we want to invigorate people and contribute to solving the problems of today:

- We want to contribute to peaceful development and violence-free solutions to conflicts in the world.
- We want to gradually democratise the world and embed global markets with political and social responsibility.
- We want to utilise the affluence of wealthy industrialised nations for the purpose of improving the living conditions of people in the poorer countries of the world.

- We want to protect the natural foundations of life in Germany and throughout the world and thus also improve people's health as well as the protection from natural disasters.
- We want to increase performance capability and also the willingness to perform in our country again and as a result entitle all people to life-long opportunities.
- We want to provide security in special circumstances and distress situations and create a modern, united community.
- We want to undertake further efforts to adjust the living conditions in the East with those in the West.

In this spirit we want to improve the quality of life. We want to take advantage of and strengthen the creative power of the people in our country and modernise the Social Democratic Party, in order that it can fulfil its role as the central force and engine for progress, even under changed conditions.

II. Where we come from

For people in Germany and Europe, the work of social democracy which began over 140 years ago is a success story. The women and men of social democracy and their fight against poverty, need and oppression in the name of freedom, peace, democracy and social-civil rights have made an essential contribution to the creation of our modern and free society. The social democrats' struggle – often against bitter opposition – has brought more freedom and sharing, more democracy and peace and more prosperity to the people of Germany.

In this 140-year struggle, social democracy was constantly inspired by a great idea that made many people enthusiastic. It is the notion of a different way of people co-existing, in which relations are not ruled by competition and fear, aggression and violence, but rather by freedom and co-operation, trust and responsibility for one another, as well as solidarity.

In the history of social democracy, this notion of a different and better way of co-existence has led to the name Democratic Socialism. Even if this term is now losing its distinct meaning and political radiance, it still stands for what it has always represented and is an absolute responsibility of social democracy. The great leading ideas of freedom, humanity, democracy, social justice and peace have not lost their fascination around the world. Likewise, in the 21st century we Social Democrats remain absolutely committed to the goals of social democracy.

Social democracy was and continues to be an emancipation movement. Our goal is to make life open for all people in order that origin, income or gender do not determine their opportunities.

We want to remove the obstacles of our times that oppose people determining their lives themselves and we want to open new paths. In order to achieve this, we want to modernise the SPD's policies and objectives. We want to re-determine the balance between individual freedom and social responsibility and, to achieve this, we propose taking the path to a modern society of opportunities. At the same time, the identity of this new SPD remains deeply rooted in the traditions of the social democratic success story. The SPD was always the party of modernity, a party of vitality, enlightenment, change and action. The SPD knew that achievement dissolves privileges and that what is hard-earned and realised through work is more important than what is merely inherited.

It was also the SPD that took over responsibility in Germany precisely in times of crisis in our country's history: in 1918 after the First World War, by heading the first democratic government in Germany; in 1933 when the SPD members of the Reichstag stood alone against Hitler's Enabling Act and voted for parliamentary democracy, whilst the conservatives and liberals failed. Social Democrats fought in opposition against Hitler and were threatened, persecuted and murdered by the Nazis.

At the end of the Second World War, the survivors of the war and those returning to Germany after having emigrated during the war set to work with other democrats on establishing a social and democratic German federal state. On this occasion the Social Democrats – this time opposite the Communists – also pledged freedom and a democratic constitutional state. In West Germany, the SPD played an essential part in shaping the Basic Law and in building up and shaping the Federal Republic of Germany.

It was the Social Democrats who initiated the policy of détente. This policy initially enabled noticeable improvements between East and West Germans, who had been separated through partition. In the long run, détente also formed the foundation for overcoming the division of Germany and Europe. East German Social Democrats made a substantial contribution to the success of the peaceful revolution of 1989/90.

It was the SPD that – whenever possible – cleared away barriers and broke with taboos so that more and more people gained access to the conditions of a self-determined life in state, economy and society. And it was the SPD that opened up opportunities for those that had been excluded and enabled affiliation. In this sense, the SPD was and still is a party of international solidarity.

This great history remains our obligation. We will carry on in new directions. Today we want and we must take responsibility in Europe and in the world. In Germany we once again want more momentum and vitality. Freedom and responsibility for public affairs, innovation and social cohesion are not contrasts for us; they are dependent upon one another.

III. What we find important

1. Our view of people

Human dignity is the starting point and goal of all of our actions.

People want to be free from dependency and patronising treatment. As rational beings, people strive for self-determination. As we are creatures of nature, we are reliant on a healthy environment.

The individual person has a propensity to freedom. It is because we are at the same time communal beings that our lives are fulfilled through solidarity with our fellow men and women. No one can realise freedom outside of society.

Most people are prepared to take on responsibility for society, even more so if society allows room for their individual interests. All of us can neither be defined as good or bad, but we are capable of both. This is why joint action is possible and why democracy and a state based on the rule of law are necessary.

We all strive for happiness and hope to find it in our own ways. Politics is not responsible for people's happiness, but it is responsible for providing the opportunities that individuals need for a self-determined life.

Ultimate truths through which people make their lives meaningful are not the business of politics, but are the creation of a social sphere for people to interpret as it suits them.

We want to meet the requirements of this joint responsibility for people's opportunities in life and sphere of freedom.

2. Our basic values

Freedom is the great promise of social democratic movements throughout the world. It always remains the binding yardstick for all of our actions.

The freedom that we want is not the window of opportunity for the powerful to develop themselves but, instead, it is the guarantee of equal opportunities for all to a self-determined life. We want freedom from oppression, from the state imposing its will, from poverty and from social discrimination, but this is not all. We want to achieve the freedom for all to live their lives as they choose. And we want freedom through equal opportunities.

Responsibility is the pledge of freedom. Those who have rights also have duties. It is only where each individual makes responsible use of his or her own freedom and accepts

responsibility for the community and fellow men and women that freedom for all is assured.

Social democracy was and is an emancipation and freedom movement. It strives to strengthen people and open paths in order that all people have the opportunity to determine and implement their life choices – independent of social origin, gender, religious or ethnic affiliation.

We want justice in order to secure the opportunities of freedom for all – not only the freedom of equal rights but also freedom of access to the requirements and resources for a self-determined life.

Equal starting opportunities are not sufficient. We want to achieve that every individual always has a new chance to be responsible for his or her own life and to participate in the work force and the opportunities in society – here at home and throughout the world.

It is just to guarantee the same dignity for all people independent of their achievements, but likewise it is also fair to appreciate their varied achievements for the community. It is unjust when those who enjoy the advantages gained through income and assets do not make an appropriate contribution for the benefit of all.

We are prepared for solidarity and call for it because we know that people need one another. A dignified life for all requires people taking responsibility for one another and helping each other beyond what the laws of justice compel them to do.

It is our involvement as people and citizens that makes society worthwhile and a place for protective, communal experience.

3. Our basic demands

Our basic values and our view of people are the standards for the modern and dignified society that we stand for.

It is a matter of participation in our society – not just about having, but also having a say in matters and joint responsibility, not only in state affairs but everywhere in society and in life where people are affected by decisions made by others.

It is a matter of challenging people, but that is not all. For also those who do not take advantage of opportunities, or in spite of making use of them are not led to an autonomous life, have a right to regular encouragement.

It is a matter of rights, but that is not all. The claim to freedom and social security includes the duty to do what one possibly can oneself to secure one's own freedom and

security, before making use of help from others. It is a matter of balancing rights with responsibilities.

It is a matter of having equal starting opportunities, but that is not all. It is fair that opportunities should be the same in individual lives. What happens, though, when this is insufficient because later in life – perhaps through unemployment – conditions prevail that destroy what an individual had made out of his or her starting opportunities? It therefore must be a matter of equal opportunities in life.

For us it is a matter of fair distribution, but not as an end in itself. The distribution of the earned social product especially serves the purpose of giving everyone the potential to have a share in our society. Even securing equal rights, such as education for those with insufficient financial means, represents redistribution and social security likewise. The pre-requirement is the creation of an adequate social product that makes this possible.

It is a matter of preserving the public sphere and making public goods available for the social, basic needs of all. Only where both of these are assured can the claim to social civil rights be fulfilled.

It is a matter of work and income, but that is not all. As long as a share in gainful occupation is not only a condition for access to material goods but also a contribution to moulding self-esteem, then work is a part of freedom and more than ever a part of justice. Work must also be humane and fairly remunerated.

It is a matter of recognising each and every person independent of his or her gender, religion, ethnic origin and cultural identity. In addition, though, reciprocal recognition of all requires that everyone accepts the political culture of democracy and all people have the opportunity to really have a share of the common social environment, in which work and participation in the activities of society are guaranteed.

It is a matter of achievement, but that is not all. For everyone is obliged to contribute what they can to the development of our society, but an individual's claim to a humane life is independent of his or her ability.

It is a matter of Germany, but that is not all. Justice commits us worldwide, because we are also responsible for the opportunities in life for people in other parts of the world.

It is a matter of sustainability, but that is not all. Today it is indispensable to deal with resources in a way that future generations would approve of if we were able to ask their opinions. However, the younger generations must also treat the accomplishments of the past responsibly. Our demand: The additional burdens brought on by an ageing society should be dispersed between the young and the old, so that both find it fair.

We want to create a society that does justice to these fundamental demands.

IV. What holds our society together

We know that globalisation speeds up the dynamic of social change and many of its effects extend into the local social environment. The undesired consequences cannot be avoided by escaping to presumed protective zones, but first and foremost through responsible planning. However, people also live in an era of globalisation throughout the world in various social environments. A policy that protects these social environments and, if necessary, chooses to modernise must therefore also aim at shaping the global framework of conditions that contribute to bringing about change in our working and social environments.

We want a society in which dynamics and innovation create progress. At the same time we want to strengthen the cohesion between people. Individuality and the opportunity for leading diverse lives in our modern society are high values, but they can also cause a loss of commitment and new conflicts. And the opportunities for an autonomous life are still not available to all people.

Confusion is the downside of diversity. Dynamics and social change strengthen the desire for stability and orientation. The world always seems to turn even faster, and people also are searching for firm ground under their feet.

Social Democrats want innovation, dynamic and equal opportunities for individual personality development. We also want to help prevent people from losing stability and orientation in this process.

We are convinced: Family, employment and social environment, the places for affiliation in cities, communities and regions are the central places for gaining experience where people can be brought together. The strength of these places of affiliation and all people sharing the opportunities they provide, therefore, is the condition for social cohesion.

To maintain a society that holds together we need the active, voluntary and responsible participation of its citizens. Neither an invisible hand nor anonymous markets see to it that beyond individual ambition there are lastingly stable forms of living together in solidarity in modern societies. It is the opportunity of community experience and the goal-oriented actions of people that contribute to cohesion in multifarious modern societies.

Collaborative action does not emerge by itself. People acquire the willingness to take over responsibility for themselves and for others in their families, at the workplace, in their residence and everywhere else where they find there is room for self-determined, self-organised and autonomous action.

Nearly all people strive for an affiliation to something, for familiarity and reliability, the longing for a home. They also have the ability to destroy this stability thoughtlessly.

Without civic involvement, without democratic experiences in the community and without an intact social environment, no society can succeed in jointly solving conflicts that arise from diversity and change. The opportunities of cohesion must be organised.

We want to encourage and protect the ways of life, attitudes and places of experience and where necessary rebuild them, in order to enable a cohesive society.

We want to strengthen the family

People first learn social responsibility through their families. It is in the family that people are first introduced to culture and values, learn rules and experience the necessary boundaries. Families are the most important and the first place for education and personality and character building. Social commitment and the willingness to act jointly with others are abilities that arise out of family experiences. It is also within the family that children first find the space within which trust and self-confidence can develop. The make-up of the family is subject to change. Nowadays, family is considered to be when people from two or more generations live together and take responsibility for one another.

An increasing number of younger people wish to live again in a stable family with children. However, far from all people can fulfil this desire. Life and work must be in balance when the choice is made to have a child. These days young women assume that it goes without saying that there are equal rights in school and vocational training, university education and career, and they demand equal rights also in partnerships and family. Today, the lack of significant full-time day-care options, the extreme demands of work, a flexible way of life with the pressure of mobility and the unequal living conditions for the sexes often prevent people from fulfilling their desire to have children and a stable family. These obstacles make a decisive contribution to the lack of children in Germany.

Without a larger number of families with children our population will shrink further. This creates serious problems for public life, the economy and funding of our social welfare systems. It also prevents many people from leading their lives as they so desire.

Social Democrats improve the framework of conditions for deciding to have a family and children. We open ways to bring family life and work life into a new, better balance. And we will ensure that life together with children will be favoured in tax law. Only in this way can we again reverse the present demographic trend.

For us, family policy is social policy. It must first and foremost provide a sufficient and high-quality childcare. It must create forms of labour organisation, educational facilities and care that give families and children room to develop. And it must open up career possibilities for women. Satisfied parents who are able to fulfil their own desires in career and family is the best pre-requisite for stable and happy families.

We want to create work for everyone

For nearly all people, work is more than just breadwinning. Despite all the changes in the professional world, people seek approval and recognition, social experiences and opportunities for personal development through work. Work provides people with the chance to have a life in which they can take responsibility for themselves and for others. Lasting unemployment excludes people and takes away their feeling of self-worth and self-esteem.

Therefore, we will adhere to the goal of full employment and fight to achieve this with greater energy and new ideas.

Every form of humane work is better than unemployment. We will work to align our economic, employment and social policies with new vigour. It would not be fair to anyone if instead of employment we were only to offer compensation. Mass unemployment threatens social cohesion. Poverty leads to exclusion.

A lasting dependency on transfer payments frequently undermines the willingness of people to accept responsibility for themselves. Such attitudes exist where they have become a habit, often being passed on to succeeding generations. We want to break through such a spiral of exclusion, because participating in society and in democracy is the condition for personal responsibility.

We want to make affiliation and home possible

Globalisation in its present-day form brings almost everything under its spell. However, cities and communities remain the home of democracy and the most important place for people to acquire social experiences. They are also considered by most people who live in them to be their individual homes. They are and remain the places where public and private life can take shape and find orientation. The world citizen without roots remains a remote invention. For the time being, people above all experience in every day life the functioning and malfunctioning of social and political order.

The state of daily circumstances determines whether or not people are able to realise their life's desires and experience the feeling of affiliation. More than anywhere else, it is here that the quality of life and public affairs either grow or deteriorate. It is here more than anywhere else that private plans are achieved, but also public civic virtues are lived out and revived. Here more than anywhere else, political engagement grows directly from the needs of everyday life.

Here it is also decided if people experience free, just and perfectly united community or if it endangers their own aspirations. Above all, here it is also determined whether or not people find stable circumstances in the confused present day world, in which they can feel a sense of belonging and feel at home. An intact social environment in our cities and

communities is therefore the decisive factor for people developing fundamental trust in the future, without which a society cannot prosper. A policy that protects and encourages the circumstances of everyday life becomes a fundamental condition for social cohesion precisely in times of accelerated change. We will resolutely adopt such a policy.

A break-up of our cities into social, ethnic and cultural fragments where nothing binds them together threatens the future of our society. The losers in times of speedy change, disconnected and uncoupled from the zones of the successful, remain trapped in the increasingly hopeless quarters of urban decay. Social cohesion is also endangered in many rural regions. Where cities or villages fall apart, democracy and civic society erode, separate from their roots and people feel alienated.

We will counteract these tendencies of threatening social disintegration with all of our strength by thrusting the policy of an intact social space into the centre of our efforts.

V. What we want

1. We want to shape globalisation and Europe

Today, globalisation shapes our options for action. It offers economic opportunities and possibilities for better utilisation of tight resources, but also great challenges. Globalisation can play a role in dispersing universally valid values and can democratise worldwide access to information and knowledge. Nevertheless, without social responsibility, economic globalisation excludes many people, in particular those from developing countries.

In order to take advantage of the opportunities of globalisation, the primacy of democratic decision-making must be preserved in a world where national borders become more permeable. We must assign responsibility at the global level and establish control options that make it possible to continue to politically determine the framework of conditions for our livelihood and economic action. We want to make use of the opportunities provided by globalisation in order to advance economic well being, peace, a just world order and the spread of democracy and human rights.

Uncontrolled concentration of power by global business enterprises and the call for more and more deregulation and denationalisation have not yet confronted a strong, regulative, global domestic policy. We want a democratic, global community but not a global state. We want a global society in which all people can live without starvation and poverty in peace, independently and self-determined. The political and legal composition of international relations and the global market is no longer a utopia today, but rather it has actually become possible, if we want it.

We are convinced that the dutiful co-operation of

- international institutions such as the United Nations (UN) with its sub-organisations
- a World Trade Organisation (WTO) that is aligned globally with just and fair trade conditions and is democratic
- additional specialised institutions such as, for example, the International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- the worldwide construction and collaboration of organisations of regional political co-operation
- and a vital, trans-national civil society

is the only way that promises success in order to give control and political creative power of the global world back to the people.

Our goal is to embed the global markets in a democratically legitimised financial, commercial, environmental and, in particular, social framework of conditions.

Our foreign and security policy

Through reunification the general conditions for German foreign policy have fundamentally changed. Germany has regained complete sovereignty and possesses a greater margin for its foreign policy. This represents additional opportunities for activity for the Federal Republic, but especially a greater degree of responsibility.

The goal of all of our efforts in foreign and security policy is to secure peace, to foster prosperity throughout the world and to gradually advance the ability of the world community to co-operate with all its members equally.

We want to shape globalisation socially and make use of its opportunities. Especially wealthier nations carry particular responsibility for achieving economic, environmental and social stability in the world. Through solidarity and a fair world trade order, the developing countries must be invigorated, so that they can determine the nature of their futures as much as possible themselves and the people in these countries can be freed from hardship.

As with domestic policy, in foreign policy the principle of autonomy should also be encouraged. The demand that the OECD nations liberalise trade relations with the developing countries is tied to the call for the political and economic elite in these countries to take on more constructive responsibility for sustainable development.

After the end of the East-West conflict, the security situation has considerably improved for many people and nations. At the same time, we live in a world of new threats. Today we turn our attention to the increasing conflicts and warlike activity in other parts of the world, civil wars and new, asymmetrical threats through terrorism and organised crime. Furthermore, oppression, poverty and social injustice are the breeding ground for the propensity to violence in many countries of the world.

The privatisation of the use of force strides forward at an alarming pace in many parts of the world, particularly in places where states collapse and the legitimate state authority is disregarded by private groups and gangs.

An effective world peace order starts with the dismantling of these hazards and the involvement of as many states as possible in creating stability and security.

We want a comprehensive world security policy

Where peace is endangered, we depend upon the international community and the development of a co-operative world order. We assume there is a comprehensive concept of security policy in which combating causes, crisis prevention, disarmament, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and peaceful settlement of conflicts all take centre stage. We know that peace can only be lastingly guaranteed if all people are

convinced they live in a just world order that ensures their chances in life and respects their right to have a say. We will exert extensive effort in achieving these goals.

The further development of international jurisdiction is also a part of this. We support a global process of democratisation and the establishment of the rule of law, which allows human rights to develop from a mere claim to actual reality all over the world.

The further advancement of international law and the strengthening of the United Nations are of central importance to us. They must be placed in a position where they are able to ensure collective security and international legal norms better than before. The various sub-organisations of the UN as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund must be co-ordinated within the UN on the basis of the UN's Charter of Fundamental Rights of 1966 in order to guarantee a political regulation of the international markets and the international flow of money.

The role of Germany

We want Germany to fulfil its European as well as its global responsibility for collective security in equal measure. We want to perform this responsibility within the framework of the international community of states, the North Atlantic Alliance and above all the European Union. Therefore, we want to strengthen Europe's ability to take action in foreign policy. The European Union must speak with one voice in order to emphasise at the international level our common goals and ideals and the specific European experiences in mastering conflicts and the peaceful balancing of interests.

Within this multilateral framework Germany is prepared to participate by sending its armed forces abroad on missions that are humanitarian, logistical, of a robust and policing nature and intended for creating trust. Beyond that, we consider the deployment of military resources to be only ultima ratio.

When all other methods have failed, we must also be prepared in limited, exceptional cases to use military force to end militant conflicts or humanitarian catastrophes as well as genocide. Both the principle of proportionality and legitimacy under international law of such a decision must be granted in every individual case. We strive for the joint development of an intervention regime that includes the valid rules that are recognised by the international community for this purpose.

A functioning transatlantic partnership is particularly important to us. Partnership incorporates the self-confident representation of one's own interests. Our objective is a fair, multilateral and responsible world order.

We want to develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as well as a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and its further development into a European Security and Defence Union (ESDU).

We want to make Europe capable of acting

European unification is an historical project of German social democracy and a guarantee for peace. In a global world it is essential that Europe is democratic and economically strong. The expansion and new constitution of the European Union are important milestones in this direction. Our vision is that of a federal Europe.

The EU is not only a union of nations – we want to turn the European Union even more into a Europe of citizens. This double legitimacy must also be reflected in the institutional system of the EU. We need a genuine twin chamber system: The Council of Ministers as the European executive chamber and the European Parliament as the European legislative chamber must both be equal pillars for future European legislature.

Clear rules of responsibility and an expansion of majority decisions will increase the efficiency of an enlarged EU. Duties and responsibilities of the EU, of the member states, at the regional and local level must be clearly assigned and respective political responsibility must also be clearly recognisable. The EU should concentrate on the tasks that it is best at managing. The future strengths of European policy will lie in being restricted to the most essential and necessary. Decisions should be made at the level where they are of most use to people and should at the same time be comprehensible to people.

For us, the EU is more than just a market – Europe is a common social space. Step by step we want to expand the economic, social and environmental development so that the EU becomes a social democracy in which freedom, solidarity and equality are lively.

In an expanded union it must, however, be possible that several member states consolidate and work together as an avant-garde, with the goal of encouraging the progress of integration throughout the EU altogether.

Potential additional measures to expand the EU must take place so that they do not oppose harmonious development. In the interest of preserving its own creative power, the EU must avoid becoming over-stretched. The borders of the EU are first and foremost founded on the values, common political goals and the ability to act on both domestic and foreign issues.

Overcoming old dividing lines and preventing new ones from arising has been one of the most important objectives of European integration for a long time. With our neighbours we want to create a sphere of stability based upon joint beliefs and equivalent to the goal of a multi-polar world order. Thus it is necessary to devise a comprehensive strategy on neighbourhood policy that can also be effective without the prospect of full membership in the EU.

2. We want participation for all in state and society

Democracy is a way of life for us. It is more than just a principle of state order. In all social areas, democracy is the basic condition for participation, for joint responsibility and therefore also for successful action. This is true in personal and work environments as well as in school and vocational training, in professional life or voluntary engagement.

Democracy is the business of everyone who lives in our nation. Those who hold elected office and represent the people carry particular responsibility. However, responsibility also lies with citizens in how they handle their right to vote, how they perceive the right to participate, in monitoring political events and above all in their civic engagement.

Our comprehension of the state

The democratic and social state of the 21st century is the partner of its citizens. Citizens and state meet one another at the same eye level. At the same time, the state partner is also the service provider for its citizens. However, this function of the state cannot be confined to this.

The state partner protects and develops public goods that can neither be reached through individual action nor through voluntary co-operation in the civil society nor through the market: domestic and foreign security, the guarantee of liberty and the rule of law, education and culture, provisions for subsistence and social security as well as the protection of the natural basic principles in life.

The modern state of the 21st century must guarantee the administration of these tasks, but it should not necessarily provide the services in every instance itself.

We want to modernise public services

The conversion of the state from father state to partner state presumes that those who are directly employed by the state and in public institutions obtain the necessary freedom to be able to confront citizens in partnership. They must be able to act creatively and with their own discretion. This means that legal provisions must allow them this freedom. Where citizens are given more responsibility, state civil servants cannot remain constantly held in tutelage.

We will bid farewell to traditional officialdom and restrict laws for officials to those related to justice, police, the armed forces, financial management and diplomatic service.

We want participation and responsibility in the civic society

Partnership between citizens and the state means that the state supports the individual and always makes new opportunities possible. Just as much, however, the state should not only enable participation and motivate people to contribute, but also require it.

A lively democracy needs civic involvement. The state has the task of encouraging this, of creating the margin and the conditions for this purpose and of involving all population groups. In so doing, we realise that the achievements that are thereby produced are not to benefit an abstract state, but are for the benefit of society or parts of it, in other words for the people themselves.

We want a civic society in which all citizens, protected by their political and social civil liberties, can actively take part. People should shape their everyday environment to a large extent by themselves. We therefore want to strengthen the forms of political involvement at all levels. In this connection the communal level is of particular importance, because people can be directly involved.

Assuming responsibility and not just involvement that is selective and without results is, in our opinion, the goal of civic participation. The people must be much more actively involved in formulating and implementing decisions. They must be able to experience the effectiveness of their involvement, because only in this way do they remain motivated on a continual basis.

This assumes that citizens are prepared to take on responsibility and to accept that not everything can be regulated by the state. And those with political responsibility must not only have confidence in citizens' responsibility, but they must also share concrete influence and power and relinquish it to them.

An active civic society strengthens state democratic institutions. It supports and supplements existing political decision-making processes.

We want to encourage integration and control immigration

Participation and joint responsibility cannot remain the privilege of the few in our society. Though many people are actively engaged in society, there are still complete groups of the population who are labelled with social exclusion and apathy.

This de-integration not only conceals a potential for violence and dangers for the social structures of our society. It also discriminates against those citizens concerned, undermines democracy and endangers solidarity in the municipalities.

Therefore, an active policy of integration is the main component of our civic society. This applies to increased political participation and participation in society, but it also

particularly applies to equal opportunities in the access to education, gainful occupation and cultural life. And, last but not least, also to urban and construction planning. The mobilisation and recognition of various groups of people can especially be achieved at the local level.

We want to control immigration. People who are persecuted for political reasons, due to their gender or their ethnic origin, war as well as civil war refugees must continue to be able to seek asylum in our country. Labour immigration must be adapted to the economic needs and social resources of our country.

We want to encourage action at the local level

An active democracy is dependent upon as many people as possible participating in elections, in public discussions and discussing differences of opinion over political decisions. People are willing to be active and participate if they actually can influence matters.

The mixed responsibility for legislative and executive matters that has been increasing for decades between the municipalities, states and the federal as well as the European levels has often made it impossible for citizens to still be able to ascribe political responsibility. As a result, neither parliamentary majorities and governments can emphasise their authentic political agenda nor can citizens articulate or withhold their trust in the success or failure associated with it.

We want to reform German federalism

Social Democrats want to again provide more liberty, transparency and self-responsibility in the Federation, states and municipalities. We are guided by the principle of subsidiarity. Decisions should be made close to the citizens and transparently. What can be taken care of on site does not need to be decided upon at a higher level.

We therefore want to strengthen the self-governing rights of the municipalities. Financial strength is also a part of this. We want to disentangle the existing mixed financing between the federal, state and municipal levels. We want to clearly reassign the responsibilities and redefine the fields as well as the types of joint responsibility, in order to come to faster and more efficient territorial voting procedures.

We want more scope for states and municipalities to be able to shape themselves. To achieve this, independent authorities in economic and finance law are needed. Last but not least, the goal of a new federalism is that the tasks of the state and their administration are executed more effectively. An essential step in this direction is the restructuring of our federal states, as we want to reduce their numbers. We intend that

the whole German nation participates by holding a vote on this constitutional reform. In so doing we are also creating genuine European regions in Germany.

Courage for a new parliamentary system

Democratic consensus is better than unilateral action. Democracy also means dialogue between majorities and minorities and, where possible, bringing them together. Neither governments nor parliaments are thereby relieved of their responsibility to make decisions. The attempts of consensus democracy in the last decades have demonstrated that, all too often, tasks and challenges were shuffled off the round table and shelved. Apart from plebiscite decisions, the democratically elected institutions are entitled and authorised to make political decisions and implement them. They are not allowed to delegate this responsibility. The civic society cannot substitute for the parliament, but this connotes more civil company and thus better democratic supervision.

3. We want to modernise the social state in order to ensure justice

The German social state strikes many today as self-evident. Many are annoyed by the burdens attached to the social state but, in case of need, no one wants to miss out on the advantages it provides. In reality, the social state under the rule of law is definitely not to be taken for granted. It is the result of long political struggles – and it is in danger. Exactly for this reason, it must therefore be further developed.

It is clear today that we need to drastically reform the social state, so that social justice can also be achieved in the future. Above all, the present German social system works reactively. Today, many social institutions are too immovable. Therefore we Social Democrats do not insist on a structurally conservative preservation. Our goal is a caring, activating and investing social state that – wherever possible – prevents problems before they arise.

The modernised social state must continue to guarantee a necessary degree of social security but, more than all else, it must motivate people and open up new opportunities. Its quality is measured not by the amount of money that it distributes. The quality of the social state is demonstrated by whether or not it opens up real opportunities in life for people and enables them to participate in society. In particular education, i.e. knowledge and competence, plays a substantial role in one's opportunities in life and opportunities to have a share in society. It is especially here that social investments in society are necessary.

It is socially just to use all opportunities so that people do not remain passive and unemployed, but rather gain the chance to be a part of society through employment.

Since various problems in our society are closely connected, we need integrated solutions. In particular, policies on employment, education and the family must correspond to each other. The investing social policy sets out to strengthen people. This includes prevention, self-responsibility and lifelong learning, so that people can unfold their own potential and take hold of their own chances. A modern and efficient social state in no way whatsoever contradicts a growth-oriented economic policy. On the contrary: It contributes to the social state.

Growth and employment are sources and conditions of social justice – conversely, social peace is the requirement for an economically successful Germany.

And so it is: Those who are not able to help themselves must be able to rely upon being helped by society. Also, those who fail need new chances. The quality of our society is measured by how humanely we treat each other – especially the weakest – and by social cohesion.

We want to create participation in society through employment

For most people, gainful employment is still a decisive factor in securing livelihood and participation in society. Work is more than breadwinning for most people. Furthermore, most places of employment are central places of association with one another and of co-operation. For these reasons, being excluded from gainful employment at the same time means being marginalized from a main part of society.

For Social Democrats, employment is also not everything. However, a life without gainful employment is neither possible for most people nor is it desirable. For millions of people day by day unemployment destroys economic and social participation, social status, affiliation and self-esteem – and thus tangible opportunities in life. For this reason alone, all must be done to set the course for more growth and employment.

At the same time, mass unemployment undermines our social welfare systems. Our goal remains full employment. It is not just a matter of dismantling unemployment. We want to raise the employment quota step by step. The participation of women in the labour force in Germany is notably far less than in other European countries. We must create the conditions for economic growth that are favourable to employment. This includes a social state that makes it possible for people who are not employed to have a chance to access or, alternatively, to make a quick comeback to the labour market. At the same time, we are fighting for humane working conditions.

The future of social security

Increased life expectancy offers all people new chances and possibilities. The know-how and active engagement of elderly people generates a social capital that through the co-

operation of generations will be of great importance. The elderly, with specific needs, will call for new markets, products, technologies and services. Within this lie immense opportunities for greater autonomy and sovereignty in the form of fulfilled lives. At the same time, the whole society has the potential for economic growth and employment. The increased life expectancy, however, also presents our social welfare systems with great challenges. In order to cope with these challenges, our society must make better use of the labour factor, instead of always placing stronger strains upon it.

An even greater challenge than increased life expectancy is the fact that in our country fewer children are born than in the past. Compared to other countries in Europe, Germany has a very low birth rate, although also in our country most people want children. We know that where there are good childcare opportunities, more women are employed and more children are born. All too often, people are forced to choose between career and family. This problem especially applies to women, who today still perform the predominant part of work in the household and child-rearing. We need extensive changes to the role of men in society, because we are unfortunately still very far away from real equality of the sexes. We want to create a child-friendly Germany.

We are, therefore, wagering on more support for life together with children. Family policy cannot limit itself to financial support. It is more important to establish more and better childcare facilities, in order to optimally encourage children at an early stage. This simultaneously helps to better combine having a family with a career. Different frameworks of life deserve the same amount of respect. This is true for a life together with children, co-habitation without children, for families as well as for singles, for women and men, the elderly and younger people.

The social legitimacy of the social state depends upon its acceptance by all generations. Sustainability and consideration for future generations are principles of Social Democratic policy. The social state of the future must be financed more through taxes, in order for less strain on labour. Financing social security primarily through wage labour decisively halts the creation of new jobs. Whereas on an international comparison the tax burden in Germany is rather moderate, the labour costs are very high due to the high payroll deductions.

Financing the social welfare systems must be built on a broad basis and cannot continue to burden labour further. Everyone who earns wages or has financial assets has the responsibility of making a just contribution. The existential risks in life such as illness, caring needs, unemployment and old age must continue to be collaboratively provided for. Thus, it is economically sensible and appropriate to re-ascertain the relationship between financing through taxation, social insurance contributions and individual provisions.

We want to overcome social hardship in our country with all resources. Protection against illness and the possibility for everyone to stay or become healthy through preventive medical checkups and utilising medical services remains for us the main promise of the

social state. Anyone who is ill must – independent of his or her income – have access to the necessary care that is customary for the current status of medical advancement.

4. We want to create employment for everyone

And so it is: Employment assures material livelihood, opens avenues, creates self-confidence, and enables participation in society and acceptance. The worst burden on our society is the stable mass unemployment. It excludes people, takes away opportunities in life, weakens growth and endangers the social state.

Our goal: sustainable growth

The basis for more and better employment is a dynamic economy. Growth is generated through new products, ideas and services. We want to encourage regional concentration, particularly in Eastern Germany and other regions of Germany that are structurally weak. Based upon the principle of invigorating existing strengths, we want an economic policy that encourages specific regions and upgrades the necessary infrastructure.

Primarily small and medium-sized businesses form the backbone of the German economy. Eight out of ten apprenticeship places and seven out of ten jobs are obtained in small and medium-sized business establishments. We will increase their investment capacity, relieve them from bureaucracy and encourage their capability to train.

We want to be a partner to small and medium-sized businesses, because they represent diversity, employment and apprenticeship as well as a solid regional development. We want to encourage a culture of independence in our country, because it is a step in the right direction toward a service-oriented society. Readiness for risk-taking, creativity and energy are qualities that our society needs. It is precisely the young entrepreneurs and founders of new businesses who exemplify them.

Entrepreneurial courage and responsibility cannot be allowed to be constricted through bureaucracy and overzealous concerns about security. An economic failure cannot be allowed to escort a newly self-employed person for the rest of his or her life. New entrepreneurs or founders of businesses are our partners for social and economic change. They also carry social responsibility, a role that we want to emphasize more strongly.

We want to improve the framework for stronger economic growth and see to it that growth creates jobs:

- We are lowering the tax burden for medium-sized businesses as well as for workers and their families. This boosts the investment capability of businesses as well as demand and consumption.

- We place emphasis on stronger financing through taxes and provision by individuals for the funding of the social welfare systems. In this way we relieve labour.
- We are dismantling fiscal subsidies and are lowering the share of administrative costs, to enable increased investment in research, technology and infrastructure at the federal, state and municipal levels. This creates employment, particularly in the trades and in medium-sized businesses.
- In the future, we will reduce investment grants as subsidies for businesses for the benefit of venture capital for those founding new businesses, for entrepreneurs in a period of growth and businesses that want to make their way out of a crisis.
- We are pursuing a policy that creates incentive for generating one's own capital resources.
- We want to dismantle unnecessary bureaucracy: in setting up businesses, research and development, licensing procedures and in planning law. This accelerates the pace of innovation and investment.
- We know that the international financial market signifies a chance for growth in Germany. Here we need clear rules and transparency and effective supervision. A strong financial centre in Germany should further develop into a source of financing entrepreneurs. It will play an increasing role in retirement provisions and altogether bring new employment to our country.

We want take things more seriously: Ownership is a commitment

The global economy is an engine for prosperity, innovation and dynamic markets. Political decisions cannot replace the market. But they can set the general conditions that provide orientation and stimulus. This includes social entrepreneurship, environmental responsibility and also ethic requirements. As businesses become increasingly international, their options increase to withdraw their responsibility for co-workers and locations. Countries must together adapt to this and react accordingly. A business that willingly commits itself to social and environmental directives in co-operation with unions and initiatives from the civil society is a promising first sign of success. We want to encourage this. Where this does not lead to the desired results, policy must ensure a binding framework so that social and environmental standards can be supported around the world.

We want a state fiscal policy that is solidly founded on providing tax and budget policies which are calculable. We want a state that does not become incapable of action due to excessive indebtedness and setting the wrong priorities. Budgetary policy must be able to reinforce or stimulate cyclical development. This includes developed resources, future-oriented expenditures and a financial margin that is not disabled by being bound to high fixed costs.

Worker participation and unions are fundamental

Worker participation in business and enterprise makes sure that people, who are at the disposal of businesses as objects, become subjects who cannot be dominated. Wage autonomy guarantees this right to have a say in matters regarding income and labour conditions for the whole economy. This requires strong unions that are capable of acting.

Not only entrepreneurs and proprietors but also employees carry great risks and thus great responsibility for the success of their business. Through the decisions they make, both employees and entrepreneurs are responsible towards society.

The unions are an important partner in bringing about change in the economy and society in a way that is both socially and economically innovative. We expect that they will contribute to the further development of the quality of employment and to shaping further occupational qualifications.

Our motto: Encourage and challenge

Not only do we need more jobs, but we also need better jobs. Both of these goals belong together. Exceptional effort is needed in order to integrate the less qualified occupational groups into the labour market. We want the public authorities to arrange labour administration so that people who are unemployed can quickly find new employment. This entails that an unemployed person should not be able to apply his or her superior occupational qualifications as criteria for the desirability of a job offer. It would be neither just nor responsible to allow him or her to reject a job on these grounds and on the basis that the work would be more appropriate for someone else.

Exceptions arise only due to health restrictions, bringing up children as well as providing and caring for family members and acting as a guardian. Thus all employment that leads to being independent of social benefits and enables an autonomous life is better than remaining unemployed. Therefore we Social Democrats advocate introducing a legal minimum wage.

We want to emphasize the principle "encourage and challenge" in our active employment policy. We want a policy of incentives for women and men, for every age and occupational group that is a matter of course for further training and qualification. Every person must have a lifelong opportunity to further cultivate and educate himself or herself.

The fight against unemployment of young people is at the centre of our labour market policy. Young people need a qualified vocational training and after this a job – if possible in the field of occupation that they learned. If they daily discover that they are needed in the adult world, they experience at the same time that achievement is really worthwhile and that they are accepted members of society.

Therefore, the Social Democrats, together with employers and unions, want to offer vocational training or qualification to every young person after completing school. We will make sure that every young adult under the age of 25 years who is unemployed for longer than six months receives an offer for vocational training, qualification or employment, instead of social welfare.

We want women to be able to secure their existence through employment in the same manner as men. A broad range of childcare options can open the way for mothers to secure the own existence and retirement provisions.

In order for more employment to be created, the barriers to access for the disadvantaged must be removed. Early retirement must be the exception. Early retirement not only places a material burden on the social state, but it also is an enormous loss of knowledge, experience and force of integration. In order to achieve this goal, policies on employment, health and continuing education can make a contribution.

As more women become employed, childcare and caring for the elderly as well as household services can develop as a substantial segment of the labour market. Due to the growing number of elderly people, demand arises for nursing care and in other areas of care.

Due to these efforts, we are aware of the abrupt changes to economic and employment worlds. New forms of employment change labour relations more radically than ever: The modern economy is shaped by flexible hours of work, new forms of profit sharing and co-venturing, increasing demands placed upon employee knowledge, a proceeding orientation on services, flexible number of employees in a company, self-employment and, last but not least, the enormous changes through constant progress in information and communication technologies.

We take these changes seriously. Public policy must also have creative options at its disposal in the future. Neither rigid insistence on the status quo nor far-reaching deregulations master the challenges of the future. Without secure employment and without a balance of the acting forces in the labour market, in the long run having sole responsibility for planning one's life will not be possible, no matter how flexible one wishes it to be.

We want to revise and update our understanding of labour. At the same time, gainful employment will continue to be at the centre of working life. Expanding autonomy and independent work will bring about the change from being an employee to that of the labour entrepreneur. In order to do justice to this change, we want to link flexibility and the dismantling of obstructive, bureaucratic rules and restrictions with the secure regulations of a state that acts responsibly. Legal rules must be further restricted within the framework of regulations. We must allow employees and also businesses a greater margin to create the details themselves, without leaving them alone. We want to orient the formation of future working hours increasingly on working hour accounts, be it the

hours a person has worked in his or her life or an annual accounting of the hours worked. We welcome such broad agreements on tariffs, which already today are providing such a margin.

We are convinced: The co-ordination of all of the instruments that we suggest will provide everyone in Germany with the chance for suitable employment.

5. We want the best possible education for all

In every century, central questions arise; questions, that more than anything else influence the existence and development of people. The 19th century was defined by the social question. In the 20th century it was both of the great world wars, with terror and dictatorship on the one side, the struggle for democracy and human rights on the other side. The 21st century is proving to be – next to the international questions of fighting poverty, protecting the environment and achieving peace – the question of education and knowledge. This is not only true for individual federal states regarding their competence in the field of education, but this also applies to our country as a whole, to Europe and the whole world.

We create a society of opportunities

Education is a decisive factor in the future of each and every individual. Good education in school, trade school or university creates lifelong opportunities: It opens up perspectives on the freedom of decision, participation and the possibilities in our society for a self-confident and independent life. Social Democrats place emphasis on education because we want to continue to offer these opportunities to everyone in our society.

Education is also the key to a socially just, economically successful and culturally exciting society. More than ever before, education is the best insurance against unemployment. Starvation and existential poverty are no longer the cardinal problems of our industrial and service-oriented society, but rather the lack of equal educational opportunities. Whether or not subsequent generations are well-equipped for the future will therefore depend upon education and the upbringing of children and upon our educational system as a whole.

Innovation and integration: The core competence of our country

Inventing new products and procedures, integrating them into the existing production and service structure and thereby generating economic, social and cultural progress: This has been the core competence in Germany for more than 200 years. At the same

time, this core competence is the pre-condition for success in international economic competition, for a high standard of living, social security and coping with environmental challenges.

The condition for this innovative and integrative capability is therefore in providing competence; it is excellent education and vocational training. This requires that everyone receives individual encouragement. This applies to low-achievers as well as to high-achievers. The elite are essential for innovation, internationality and excellence.

However, the actual dangers for Germany's core competence lie neither in technical development nor its pace, but instead in the disproportion between technological advancement and the transferring of knowledge based on it. Changes no longer progress in the same rhythm as the generations.

Social Democrats will therefore create the conditions to enable that the call for lifelong learning does not make people in our country feel uncertain and threatened but instead can be experienced as opportunity and enrichment.

Competence and orientation - Our goals for education and upbringing of children

Education is at the same time the answer to cultural challenges in modern societies. International competition, unlimited opportunities for information and communication, high unemployment, new threats and international crises, changed family structures, the diversity of lifestyles and moral concepts have all led to increasing uncertainty and a lack of orientation. Today it is necessary more than ever before to educate people to be independent and self-confident and to mediate a democratic and humane orientation, in order to achieve a modern society that is cosmopolitan, stable and where people respect one another.

Investment in education is an investment in the future

In spite of the investments in education and the reform efforts of the past, the course of education in Germany is strongly dependent upon social origin more than in any other country. Simultaneously, when rated on an international comparison, the top performers in the German educational system place at most in the middle field. Our educational system is neither able to keep up with outstanding achievement, nor to provide sufficient encouragement for those who are academically weaker.

Germany needs a national effort for education. Direct transfer payments from the state to individuals must be reviewed and assigned to the benefit of investing in the education budget. In doing so, we allow ourselves to be guided by four principles:

- We need timeliness, because delayed offers for the most part are of little use and are always more expensive. We are giving day-care facilities for children an educational mandate. We must expand upon early encouragement and language learning and build a bridge from nursery school that leads to school. In the long run, pre-school education must be exempt from charges.
- We are counting on the principle of all-day, because the school of the future is the all-day school - for everyone who wants or needs it. This type of school not only needs teachers, but it also needs, for example, psychologists, theatre and sports teachers and educators. Thus, pupils are then called upon and encouraged in very diverse ways. Furthermore, all-day schools enable the compatibility of a job with a life with children.
- We are wagering on the principle of all-day, because we want to educate the complete person and not just fill his or her head with knowledge.
- We provide permeability, because this is the only way to guarantee opportunity for all. We are against compartmentalisation and support learning together for as long as possible. For Social Democrats, life is open and therefore school must also be so. Every person can and should develop his or her abilities accordingly: This is our claim to a free society.

We want to enable independence and motivate competition

In reforming German educational structures, we are counting on the independence and autonomy of schools and universities. We also would like competition between these educational establishments because competition has a productive effect and enhances performance.

Parents, pupils, students, teachers and professors know best how they want to work together. At the same time, though, we need national standards of quality and performance for all establishments and obligatory state financing to assure compliance with these standards. These standards will in the future replace the inflexible legislative guidelines of the state.

We want equality for vocational and general education

Germany still has a great advantage in training young people for jobs: the dual occupational training system. We want to re-invigorate this dual occupational system in vocational schools and businesses and thereby bring about equality for vocational and general education (e.g. through admitting master craftsmen to universities).

However, the most important task is to increase the willingness and capability of businesses to supervise trainees:

- through increasing apprenticeship capacity in small and medium-sized business establishments and abolishing bureaucratic hurdles;
- through encouraging an apprenticeship network amongst smaller business establishments;
- through modularising the course of occupational training and creating new apprenticeship places for teenagers and young adults who have low entry-level qualifications.

We want to improve our universities

In order to maintain its international ability to compete, Germany needs more and better trained university graduates and it needs to open up its universities and technical colleges to advanced vocational training. Therefore, it is just as necessary to further differentiate and internationalise our university landscape as it is to strengthen their financial power.

In order that they can compete against each other, it is necessary that the individual universities have strong profiles. Likewise, the need to invigorate university autonomy must proceed with consequent and continuous evaluation, in order to guarantee quality assurance.

Internationalisation is urgently necessary. This, of course, also includes an international comparability of programmes of study and degrees. We are off to a good start at the European level.

To equip universities for more students, more private financial sources must be made accessible in addition to the existing state ones. The Social Democrats therefore want to develop a system of deferred university fees, in which students pay their financial contribution to the university after they complete their studies and take up employment. This not only fortifies the financial strength of universities, but it also strengthens the service correlation between students and instructors.

Converting universities into foundations is a trend-setting approach.

For the benefit of more independence for students and more autonomy, we are making it possible for students to support themselves through educational loans.

Continuing education is the task of businesses

Learning after having finished school, vocational education or university is increasingly important not only for personal opportunities for advancement, but also for safeguarding what has already been achieved occupationally and materially.

In the future, advanced vocational training will remain the task of businesses; it is understood to be in their own interest. The goal is "training on the job" and not the re-training of the unemployed by the state. At the same time, state-run establishments such as vocational colleges and universities must place more emphasis on the task of further qualifications – in co-operation and also in competition with private institutions for further learning.

6. We want to make the world we live in safer

Modern societies are rich in opportunities – but also uncertainty. The everyday flood of information and new demands upon flexibility and the ability to learn and change make people insecure, but people are also unsettled by the experience of the unfamiliar and immigration as well as change in the social environment.

It is precisely in times of change that most people long for reliability, familiarity and security in their economic and social circumstances. For many people, the pace of change and the pressure to adjust produce a feeling of stress. If the difference between the actual or presumed demands from society and work compared with individual life perspectives appears to be increasing, then insecurity grows.

It is right that citizens should expect their state to guarantee them an adequate degree of security – and in various regards. For a long time now security cannot just be limited to the protection of life and limb; it also refers to economic and social livelihood as well as the experience of community.

The protection of life and limb and property is indeed very significant. Without this, it is also impossible to achieve economic, social, environmental and democratic stability and security. Protection from crime is the one essential requirement for everyone.

For Social Democrats, there is no contradiction between security and freedom – and therefore also no prioritising of both of these public goods. On the contrary: Security and freedom are mutually dependent.

Freedom needs security

Guaranteeing the protection and security of its citizens is the central duty of the democratic constitutional state. Security of individuals cannot be dependent upon their financial leverage. Tasks of the police must therefore remain mandatory duties, for which the state carries direct responsibility.

The Social Democrats differentiate between the needs of foreign and internal security. Protection from external attacks and military missions outside our country's borders are the task of the armed forces.

Internal security remains the duty of the police. We want to retain this distinct separation of responsibility. Mutual support and administrative assistance are already possible to a sufficient degree and are necessary.

We support a federal police structure that is in close contact with citizens. The challenge in coming years is to organise the co-operation and in particular the exchange of information between the police in the individual German states and the federal police, but also within Europe and further beyond. At the local authority level, partnerships for security between the police and boards for crime prevention are an appropriate means for preventative crime fighting. Those who nevertheless are the victims of crime have the right to be protected and helped by the community.

Uniform security standards, for example identity and travel documents, should be established in international co-operation.

Great challenges such as fighting organised crime and international terrorism will demand our efforts for a long time. Therefore we need to have a particular sense for maintaining the right balance between essential security measures and the right to freedom of citizens.

It is a great goal of ours to create a framework in which crime and terror preferably do not arise. For us, prevention, pre-emptive political action and contributing to problem-solving are therefore important elements of internal security policy.

We want safe and lively neighbourhoods and cities

In everyday life in our cities we often view the challenges and tasks of our society as if looking at them under a magnifying glass. This pertains particularly to the problems that arise through people living together, that elsewhere are not too obvious but are already noticeable: the disassociation of living quarters and complete districts of cities where there is high unemployment, a lack of social and cultural infrastructure and apparent neglect. An increase in homelessness, drug addiction and crime often accompany this trend. Frequently, the residents of such city districts who have the financial and social means gradually leave these neighbourhoods, so that the few remaining stabilising factors of urban society dwindle away.

We must prevail over parallel societies

The mistakes of the past have caught up with us: housing estate policy, urban development and house building and, last but not least, the decades of political denial of immigration. On the one hand, we have allowed the problems involved with integrating people from other cultures and places of ethnic origin to be kept silenced publicly – often in order to avoid the danger of stigmatisation and the accusation of latent xenophobia. This happens just as often, however, because it is easier to quieten matters down by granting social benefits and employing social workers. We therefore need new concepts to specifically encourage integration.

Integration includes demands upon immigrants. Germany has an established and recognised constitution and its own political and democratic identity. Integration not only requires a passive tolerance for the political culture of the constitutional democracy but also active support.

In recent years, these shortfalls have led to a makeup of ethnically and culturally closed parallel societies almost everywhere in Germany. Many of these parallel societies have virtually little in common with each other or with the society as a whole. We want to change this.

We want the right of way for cities and municipalities

The path to change leads to robust cities, municipalities and rural districts. Our local authorities can be places of integration. Here – and not in the governments of the federal states or in parliament – is where it is determined whether or not people create a lively and exciting community, get along well with one another and solve conflicts peacefully. It is here that urban planning and urban development bring people from different social groups together and develop a stable urban environment. This is also where the groundwork is created which enables the young and old, families, single parents and singles, the handicapped and the able-bodied, Germans and foreigners to live in a good environment.

For this reason, language assistance, sport and leisure time opportunities, child and youth welfare services, music schools, museums, theatres, adult education centres and other cultural establishments and also assistance for homeless people, drug addicts or victims of crime are offered by local authorities. We want to also encourage integration through inspiring and supporting ethnically and culturally mixed initiatives in the civic society.

People actively engaged in our cities, municipalities and rural districts will master these tasks. This applies whether they are serving as honorary or full time local politicians, as active members in clubs or organisations, in neighbourhood or citizen's groups or cultural and environmental groups. However, they need a reliable foundation for their

engagement. Autonomy and self-government are only possible if they have a solid financial base.

Therefore, this is true for the Social Democrats: We do not want a hierarchical ranking of the federal, state and local authority levels. Cities, municipalities and rural districts possess their own political and cultural value. It can neither be derived from the interests of the federal state nor can it be subordinate to these interests.

We will see to it that in the future: Cities and municipalities have the right of way. Municipal finance reform and linking state tasks to municipalities and securing sufficient funding are therefore a decisive political goal of Social Democratic domestic policy.

7. We want to create a new culture of innovation

A society that increasingly gets older and at the same time wants to endure intensified international competition cannot only focus on what exists and what is well established. It must bring forth a culture of innovation.

In innovations and technical progress we primarily see opportunities. They are also the pre-condition for the future guarantee of wealth and prospects for development, and also for social security for all.

We want to foster the courage to take new paths. To do this, we are rebuilding the strengths and structures that we need in science, economy and society to be among the leaders of progress.

We are wagering upon the strengths of our scientific and economic organisation. We want to make use of these strengths and develop them further. However, we do not close our eyes to the visibly obvious weaknesses at the present time. Germany must be freed from the encrusting influence of interest groups and become capable of acting again.

We guarantee the freedom of science and research. At the same time we want to make sure that public funds are implemented responsibly and efficiently. To make optimal use of all research potential we need a strategic promotion of research. Scientific organisations should accept this challenge by establishing a forum for the promotion of research.

Innovation implies the willingness to take risks and to try out new ways. The procedures for promoting research cannot lead to the standardisation of research, and they must maintain low entrance thresholds for new researchers and new fields of research. We therefore want to form the framework of research so that the willingness to take risks is adequately encouraged.

In favour of an innovation-friendly society

Innovations and technical progress need social acceptance, in order that they can come into existence and be successfully implemented. Such acceptance calls for transparency and dialogue. We therefore support the public discourse between science and society over possibilities and limitations, over chances and risks in modern research. Responsible and successful science must discuss and evaluate the consequences of new developments publicly and it must respect the ethical demarcations of society.

Innovation needs clever masterminds. Our educational system must be capable of equipping as many people as possible to participate for a lifetime in responsibly shaping an information society. Therefore, we want to make far better use than ever before of the opportunities of education in early childhood, increased individual training and improve qualification possibilities for older people.

In favour of reforms that encourage innovation

The condition of the social state is an essential factor of a society's ability for innovation. We therefore want to better adjust the structure of the labour market and social systems to the needs of an information society. In this connection we also want to create the conditions for enabling women to make more use of their formidable occupational skills.

Only those who offer attractive conditions for the best minds worldwide will be able to sustain their position in competing for innovation in the long run. We want to construct immigration law and financial opportunities so that highly qualified people come to us.

Our capacity for innovation and economic productivity depend to a great extent upon using public funds for education and research. Thus, we want to abolish traditional subsidies and limit wasteful expenditures, in order to gain sufficient financial leeway for investing in the future.

We want to create a climate in Germany in which innovation is understood as an opportunity and as a necessity for society, that associates the will to modernise with the readiness to guarantee equal opportunity and social security to everyone.

8. We want to implement a lasting environmental policy

Environmental protection and the sparing use of natural resources are central issues of the future because we know that, if both are not successful, everything else would be endangered. Sustainable environmental protection is the basic requirement of all responsible policy.

A lasting and effective protection of our environment can only succeed if, instead of merely fighting environmental damage post-operatively, we take action that provides sustainability. Despite increased awareness and good proposals, the destruction of our natural resources still continues. The trends in climate change which are dangerous for all people and their existence have still not been effectively halted.

The protection and security of our natural resources can, however, also open up new fields of technological innovation and economic growth. We are also obliged to protect resources where no direct material use is detectable. As the main actors causing climate change and its inherent dangers, the industrial nations are also the main actors to see to it that these changes do not continue. We take responsibility for this and want to be amongst the outriders in implementing the Kyoto Protocol.

Developing countries must be granted adequate support from industrial nations for protecting their natural resources as well as for encouraging renewable sources of energy.

Preserving a liveable environment is not only restricted to nature conservation. It is part of a comprehensive policy of responsibility to subsequent generations; it is the basis for a policy of generational justice. We must learn to satisfy the needs of the present without damaging the capability of future generations to be able to satisfy their own needs similarly.

We want a preventative environmental policy

The preventative environmental policy that we want cannot be a partial policy in addition to others. It is all-embracing and influences nearly all other areas of policy. Protection of our natural foundations for life is bound to increasing our quality of life, climate protection with increased efficiency in the use of our natural resources.

By substantially increasing our energy efficiency we see a great chance for an effective environmental policy, which at the same time also opens up economic opportunities through new products, new services and lower costs. We want to encourage technological progress that drastically improves the efficiencies of energy production and energy consumption. We want to double the annual rise in energy efficiency over that of today. The great margins in this field are nowhere near being tapped to their full potential.

We want to press ahead with promoting renewable energy and thus strengthen Germany's position that it has earned in the last years as a technological front-runner and a global market leader in this future-oriented field of innovation. By the middle of this century, more than half of the total primary energy supply should be provided through renewable energy. By the end of the century, we will completely change over to solar energy, which is exclusively composed of renewable energy sources and to a large extent renewable raw materials.

With increased energy efficiency and the expansion of renewable energy, we secure the groundwork for consequently proceeding with phasing out nuclear energy. We are determined to do this so that future generations are not burdened with more lethal radioactive waste.

We want to implement a policy of sustainability

The policy of sustainability that we want joins together social, environmental and economical dimensions through co-ordinated strategies of action. It is indisputable that nothing is reasonable for the whole economy that is unreasonable for the environment. But between economic dynamics, environmental goals and the social goal of societal cohesion, conflicts can arise at any step in a policy of sustainability. We want these conflicts to be clearly labelled so they can be fairly settled. We dismiss setting priorities for every individual conflict abstractly and without precise knowledge of the situation. Responsible decisions can only be made in particular cases under careful consideration of the various risks and objectives. In settling such conflicts, we advocate a sustainable balance of economic, social and environmental concerns. Protecting the future should never break down in the process.

Sustainability requires a policy of foresight. Here we want to particularly encourage environmental innovations, from the conception of the product to the production process to consumption and recycling the used raw materials.

We want to pursue co-operative environmental policy

A particular challenge is the international competition for position. It creates the pressure for nations to mutually undercut each other, also with regard to environmental standards. We support a policy that stops this momentum and removes the protection of responsible environmental criteria from competitive pressure. It is here that the high intrinsic value of social and business-political interests must also be brought to bear.

We predominantly understand the policy of sustainability to be a co-operative environmental policy, because it demands networking. Self-commitment, round tables with the social actors and learning from the better example are often more important than hierarchical guidelines and bureaucratic controls. In this manner, the environmental awareness of a growing number of citizens is made use of and also invigorated as a requirement for effective environmental policy. In this area we also need new forms of co-operation of citizens as well as between citizens and the state.

The state cannot replace the action of citizens. The civic society and its actors play a key role. This also applies to the economy and the actions of its decisive actors. It is only through their co-operation with one another that sustainable policy can be successful. We want to achieve an integrated strategy that combines new forms of participation, self-

commitment of the economic actors, active citizens in the civil society and the action of state environmental policy.

The responsibility of the state remains the basis for co-operative environmental policy, because only the state can set a binding framework through political decisions. This is true for taxes and deductions as well as for financial incentives, by means of which environmental common sense should be rewarded. We know that a policy of sustainability cannot succeed without commandments and prohibitions, boundaries, reservations about permission and environmental crime law that punishes the polluter. But that should not be all.

Our vision is that of a society that takes responsibility for the environment, where everyone is also prepared to do what is necessary without regulation, so that the basic fundamentals for human civilisation remain permanently assured.

VI. Whom we need

We want to create a society that has the will and has developed the ability to fairly balance out the unavoidable tensions:

Tensions between innovation and social security, between economic dynamics and social cohesion, between one's own initiative and responsibility for the community.

Tensions between environmental protection and productivity, between self-interest in our own society and our global responsibilities.

There are neither ready-made recipes nor the guarantee that these tensions can be balanced harmoniously. But there are guidelines for action. And there are chances for success.

There is also a great willingness amongst many people from various occupations and age groups, from different social levels and environments, with varying blueprints on life and beliefs to support a fair and sustainable balance of these unavoidable tensions here in our country and in all parts of the world.

We appeal to all of you to work together with us, so that together through the new opportunities of our time we can turn a better life into reality.

We must convince, unify and mobilise the political centre of our society to act as the heart and driving force for the ongoing process of fair cultural, social and political integration.

These impulses for a new agenda are an appeal to everyone who wants to assist in modernising our society and creating a just world order in the spirit of liberty and responsibility, justice and solidarity. We call on you to work together with us.

This united political centre of our society, to whom we appeal and for whom we are campaigning, is not a closed club with firm membership. It is an open project with the objective of winning political majorities for responsible action. We want to turn this into a reliable political majority in our country.

Every citizen is invited to participate – not only through practical support of our proposals in order that they can be implemented, but also through critical dialogue, so that we can improve our proposals.

Let us fight together for a better future.

For social democracy.

Appendix

The academic partners in dialogue

at the workshop "The Future of Social Democracy" from 29 September-4 October 2003 at the "Kurt Schumacher Academy" of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Bad Münstereifel

Prof. Dr. Werner Abelshauser

University of Bielefeld

Prof. Dr. Frank Decker

University of Bonn

Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Heitmeyer

University of Bielefeld

Prof. Dr. Rolf Heinze

Ruhr University Bochum

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kocka

President, Social Science Research Centre Berlin (WZB)

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Merkel

University of Heidelberg

Prof. Dr. Thomas Meyer

Academic Director of the Political Academy of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation

Prof. Dr. Paul Nolte

International University of Bremen

Dr. Alfred Pfaller

Friedrich Ebert Foundation

Prof. Dr. Birger Priddat

University of Witten/Herdecke

Prof. Dr. Roland Roth

University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg-Stendal

Prof. Dr. Fritz Scharpf

Max-Planck-Institute for Social Research

PD. Dr. Wolfgang Schroeder

Board of Directors, IG Metall

Prof. Dr. Nico Stehr

Karlsruhe Centre for Research

Prof. Dr. Michael Zürn

University of Bremen

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