

Hamburg Programme

Principal guidelines of the Social Democratic Party of Germany

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Introduction

Progress and justice in the 21st century

The future is open – full of new opportunities, but also full of threats. Therefore we must fight for progress and social justice by democratic means. Committed to the people, in the proud tradition of democratic socialism, with sense for reality and energy the German Social Democrats are accepting their tasks in the world of the 21st century, for permanent peace and safe ecological foundations in life. For a free and fair society in solidarity. For equality and self-determination of all people – independent of origin and gender, free from poverty, exploitation and fear.

We are aiming at a free and fair world order. We are favouring the strength of law to overcome the law of the strongest. A social Europe must become our response to globalization. Only in joint security and responsibility, only in solidarity and partnership will peoples, states and cultures shall we be able to safeguard the survival of humankind and our planet.

We are working for sustainable progress combining economic dynamism, social justice and ecological reason. We want to overcome poverty and exploitation by means of qualitative growth enabling good work for all and counteracting the menacing climate change. The natural foundations for life shall be safeguarded also for future generations and quality of life need to be improved. To this end we want to put the opportunities of scientific and technical progress into the service of humankind.

We are developing the preventive welfare state combating poverty, offering people equal opportunities for a life in self-determination, granting fair participation and providing reliable security for major risks in life. We are favouring togetherness of the generations and equality of women and men. We are dedicating our support to families, focusing our special support on the weakest groups in our society. We want a healthy life and good education for all. We do not want to leave behind any child.

We are favouring the strengths of civil society in solidarity. With the creative power of democratic policy we want to strengthen cohesion in our country enabling a sense of belonging and being at home. We want to promote a culture of recognition in Germany: people shall live together in mutual respect of dignity, culture and contribution of their neighbours. We are working for our social and democratic constitutional state granting security in freedom.

In our times of rapid change many people are searching for orientation and perspective. We know that millions of people in the entire society are sharing our values and goals. We want to win over this majority in solidarity for our social democratic policy.

1. Our lifetime

The 21st century is the first really global century. Never before people relied on each other so much worldwide. With the collapse of Communism the division of our country and the political split of the world were overcome. Since then we have experienced the most profound historical change since the industrial revolution. Science and technology are driving change. This century will either become a century of social, ecological and economic progress bringing more wealth, justice and democracy for all people or it will become a century of fierce distribution struggles and raging violence.

Today's lifestyle of our industrial societies will overstrain the earth's ecological power of endurance at the latest when nine instead of six billion people will act and consume as we have done up to now in the richest part of the world. Dignified human life, peace in the world and

the habitability of our planet are jeopardized. An increasing part of the world population already suffers from the repercussions of global warming, from desertification and water shortages. People from regions where ecological conditions cause famine are flooding into less jeopardized parts of the world. Slowing down and stopping the climate change is therefore one of the main challenges in the 21st century.

The contradictions of globalization

The world is growing together. Digitalized media and other technical developments have revolutionized the relevance of space and time. For the first time in history we are experiencing worldwide division of labour involving major parts of mankind. Globalization, open borders and markets are not only the result of technical innovations but also of political decisions. This offers the chance to overcome famine, poverty and epidemics. World trade brings new work and wealth for many people. At the same time, however, global capitalism is characterized by a lack of democracy and justice. Thus it is opposed to a free world living in solidarity. It enhances old and creates new injustice. Therefore we fight for a policy defining a social response to global capitalism in our own country, in Europe and in the world.

Global capitalism is heaping up large quantities of capital which, however, do not necessarily create new wealth. Raging finance markets bring speculation and expectations conflicting with sustainable and long-term economic action. If the sole target is rapid and high return on capital jobs are destroyed and innovations prevented many times. Capital must serve the purpose of value added and wealth.

With globalization the world increasingly amalgamates in one single market. Economic power is concentrated in global corporations, banks and funds. Transnational corporations plan their profit-making strategies worldwide undermining democratically legitimized decisions. Nation states, even the largest amongst them, run the risk to become mere locations competing for investments of global capital. Therefore nation states must join forces and strengthen their influence together. Europe has adopted this course. A social Europe can also play a model role for other parts of the world.

The world holds more knowledge than ever before. Technical progress has gained breathtaking speed. Heavy physical work can be substituted. We can overcome diseases considered incurable for a long time. Average life expectancy is increasing. But not all people benefit from knowledge and other public goods just because they are available for sale. In many countries the gap between poor and rich is widening. The destruction of nature is progressing worldwide.

Where borders fall chances increase for peaceful togetherness of peoples and cultures. However, the more the world is growing together the more it becomes vulnerable. We are experiencing the disintegration of states, the development of breeding grounds for anarchy and terrorism and the arbitrary division of the world in good and evil by religious and political fundamentalists. Privatized denationalized violence and the dissemination of weapons of mass destruction are creating new hazards. All of this jeopardizes peace.

After two murderous world wars and the Holocaust the peoples of Europe have created a continent of peace and open borders. The peaceful revolutions of 1989 have overcome the division of Europe in East and West. German unification has brought freedom and democracy for our entire country. People are enjoying wealth and quality of life as never before, not only in Germany but almost all over Europe. At the same time, however, Europe is experiencing a crisis of confidence amongst citizens. People in the states of Europe, even in Germany, want more consideration of social concerns, more respect of national identities and cultural traditions. Therefore Europe must be more than a confederation of states, it must become a social and democratic alliance of its citizens.

Profound changes in the world of employment and in society

For the first time there is worldwide competition of services and labour parallel to the world market of capital and commodities. More people than ever before are directly affected by globalization and international competition. Russia, China and India are future markets for us. With their appearance on the world market, however, the workforce available within the scope of global division of labour is also growing enormously. Competition is becoming fiercer.

Germany has benefited from globalization thanks to the strength of its industry. But not everyone in our country is a winner. Workforces are experiencing how even flourishing companies are being relocated. Anonymous fund managers are buying and selling companies like traders sell their commodities on a wholesale market.

Our working society is undergoing profound change. Speed of innovation and variety of employment are increasing. Qualifications and knowledge are becoming increasingly important. New creative occupations are developing. Traditional normal employment contracts, permanent and with regular working hours, are losing importance. Working life is now characterized by a change between employment, unemployment, phases of family work and self-employment.

These changes, often experienced as constraint, may overstrain and frighten people. Many people are afraid of being left behind and being neglected or even forgotten by politics. Older workers and people with lower qualifications are more excluded from the labour market than others. Even women with excellent qualification still do not get fair access to career making opportunities and paid employment to make a living. Those in work frequently fear that their quality of life is jeopardized because of increasing pressure, fiercer competition and the demand for permanent availability.

After the Second World War Social Democrats, trade unions and social movements made major progress in the Federal Republic of Germany. More people than ever before were able to take part in cultural and social life while social security reached a high standard. Unrestrained global capitalism jeopardizes these success stories. Poverty is spreading again and the gap between rich and poor is widening, even in Germany. Not everyone is able to earn a living by his or her own work. This is especially true for many people in the new Federal States. Many migrant families and single mothers and fathers are struggling hard to earn a living and create a good life for their children. Many have been living on benefit for three generations. Poverty is frequently inherited because in Germany, more than elsewhere, opportunities for good education depend on parents' background. For many people the ladder of social advancement is still out of reach.

Our society has progressed far on the way towards equal opportunities for women and men. The traditional role assignment, however, has not yet been overcome. Legal equality in itself does not mean equal opportunities. In the world of work and occupation old discriminations continue to exist. Compatibility of family and occupation still is predominantly a problem of mothers, women earn less than men, they are more threatened by loss of job and by poverty.

Life expectancy in Germany is increasing which is a great gift. Living longer means having more time for activity, education and enjoyment relegated to the background for a long time. On the other hand, more old people will depend on assistance by society, especially when they live alone.

At the same time fewer and fewer young men and women are fulfilling their wishes for children. This is leading to drastic changes in many areas of everyday life, from the world of employment to the social systems, totally changing the atmosphere in our society. The few young people are leaving entire regions whilst the old ones are staying. If we do not want to

abandon any region we must help the people to create future perspectives for their home places.

Globalization also has a cultural dimension. Religions and cultures are meeting more than ever before. Nowadays almost everywhere in the world, people find members of their culture, products from their home countries and media helping them to stay in touch with their countries of origin. On the other hand they meet members of other cultures in their home countries. Foreign worlds are approximating with the chance to understand them. Wherever the fear of the foreign predominates there is an increasing risk for prejudices to become conflicts. Where cultural conflicts are enhanced by social antagonisms violence will spread. Cultural variety, however, is nowadays a characteristic element of successful societies.

Democracy and Politics

Globalization reduces the possibilities of the nation state to shape life. At the same time politics has to accept new tasks like climate protection, social integration of millions of people and demographic change.

Many people sense the state's loss of power in the global era. They do not believe any more that things can be changed by politics. The most crucial tasks of Social Democrats are therefore reestablishing the confidence of people that society can be shaped, encouraging them to accept their destiny in self-determination and solidarity.

Our democracy is experiencing a crisis of confidence. Traditional party affiliations are decreasing. The readiness to accept social responsibility is still high since we are not living in an apolitical epoch. The political parties are still indispensable elements of a democratic society. They are bundling convictions and interests of the population. They are taking citizens' needs and expectations to the levels of decision-making and action of our society. This requires internal democratic structures, mobility, imagination, clear profiles, reliability and trust.

We are convinced of shaping the future in peace, justice and solidarity. We derive our ideas of a future worth living from a clear and realistic analysis of the time in which we live. There is no return to the era of the old industrial society and the nation states of the 20th century. The great task of the 21st century is to shape globalization by democratic policy. We are looking ahead.

2. Our core values and core convictions

The German Social Democratic Party, the oldest democratic party in Germany, has always been part of an international liberation movement. After its foundation it was both emancipation movement of workers and democracy movement supposed to overcome the authoritarian state. In Germany it continued the ideas of the French Revolution and the revolution of 1848. In Germany the history of democracy cannot be separated from the history of the Social Democratic Party. It brought rights of freedom and democracy, it fought for women's rights and rejected any dictatorship. Early on it realized the hazard of National Socialism rejecting the Act of Empowerment in the Reichstag. Many social democrats offered resistance and fell victim to the NS terror. The will to freedom made the break with the communists inevitable. The refoundation of the Social Democratic Party in the GDR became a signal of freedom.

The Social Democratic Party developed as part of the labour movement. It fought for workers' rights, developed the social welfare state, and together with the trade unions it enabled disdained proletarians to become self-confident state citizens with equal rights.

Unlike other parties the Social Democratic Party always had both an international and European orientation. This is why we are still working on the project of a united Europe which used to be a vision in the Heidelberg Programme of the SPD which can now be complemented.

Although many wholehearted pacifists considered the Social Democratic Party their political home it has never been a pacifist party but it has always been immune to chauvinism and militarism. In power it served peace. We are proud that we have never brought war, oppression or dictatorship to our people.

From the onset the SPD was the party of democracy. Social Democrats decisively shaped the political culture of our country. Women and men of various origins, religious and philosophical convictions are cooperating in it. Since the Godesberg Programme of 1959 they considered themselves the people's party of the left with roots in Judaism and Christianity, Humanism and Enlightenment, Marxist analysis of society and the experience of the labour movement. The people's party of the left owes many impulses to the women's movement and new social movements.

We know that each time requires its own solutions to social and political issues. In our strife for contemporary programmes of social development we profess open debate. We welcome and respect personal convictions and beliefs. They must never be subjected to party decisions. We are united by the conviction that society can be shaped instead of capitulating to blindfold action of capitalistic globalization. We are also united by the historical experience pursuant to which social democratic policy can only be successful if it is linked to democratic commitment of people in trade unions, movements of peace, women, environment, civil rights, one world as well as movements and networks criticizing globalization. Social democrats will be close to such movements even in future.

Our concept of humankind

Equal dignity of all people is the starting point and aim of our policy. People have diverse inherent potentials that are neither inherently good nor evil. They have the gift of reason able to learn. Therefore democracy is possible. People are fallible and may err and revert to inhumanity. Therefore democracy is necessary. Everybody is responsible for his/her own life. Nobody should be relieved of this responsibility by anybody. People must never be humiliated for any purpose, neither by the state nor by economy. We reject any ambition of omnipotence over people. If politics itself promises bliss and fulfilment it runs the risk of slipping into totalitarian rule.

Democracy is the only political system living up to self-responsibility of people tailoring the limits of politics accordingly. Human and civil rights set limits for politics and state institutions without which democracy cannot exist. However, human beings are not only individuals with rights and duties but also social beings and as such ready for cooperation. Democracy supports readiness for cooperation by its institutions organizing solidarity through various social strata, generations and origins.

„Free and equal in dignity and rights“, as stipulated by the General Declaration of Human Rights, every person shall shape his/her life in self-determination together with others. We are striving for a society of free and equal persons where everyone can develop his personal-ity in freedom without impairing the dignity and freedom of others. We are rejecting any discrimination. The dignity of humankind is independent of performance and economic usefulness. Therefore society has a special commitment in case of disablement, age, at the beginning and end of life to protect human dignity.

Our core values

„Freedom, equality, fraternity“, the basic demands of the French Revolution, are the foundation of European democracy. Since the goal of equal freedom in modern times has become the notion of justice freedom, justice and solidarity have become core values of democratic socialism in freedom. They remain our criterion to assess political reality, the yardstick for better social systems and orientations to actions of Social Democrats.

Social Democrats have always aimed at establishing both material and legal conditions of freedom and equality of law, in parallel to equal participation and opportunities in life hence, social justice.

Quite often, conservatives and liberals are playing off core values against each other: the more freedom, the less justice and vice versa. In the Social Democrats' philosophy both form a unit. They are of equal value and rank. Above all they condition, complement, support and limit each other. The philosophy of our core values prevents us from reducing freedom to the freedom of markets, justice to the constitutional state and solidarity to care for the poor.

Freedom means the possibility of self-determination. Every person is qualified and competent for freedom. The question if he/she can live commensurate with this vocation is decided in society. Every person must be free of undignified dependencies, misery and fear, with the chance to develop talents and to become a responsible participant in society and politics. People can only use their freedom if they know they enjoy a sufficient amount of social security.

The freedom of individuals ends where it impairs freedom of others. People expecting others to live without freedom cannot be free in the long run.

Justice is grounded on equal dignity of every person. It is a synonym for equal freedom and equal opportunities, independent of background and gender.

Therefore justice means equal participation in education, work, social security, culture and democracy as well as equal access to all public goods. Where unequal distribution divides society into people giving and following instructions it infringes upon equal freedom and is thus unfair. Therefore justice requires equal distribution of income, property and power since major inequality in distribution jeopardizes equal opportunities in life. Therefore social democracy is necessary.

Equal opportunities in life do not mean uniformity but space for the development of personal predilections and capabilities. People are different. However, natural inequalities and social differences in somebody's origin must not become social destiny. Paths through life must not be fixed from the beginning. We are rejecting any form of privilege or disadvantage because of origin, class, colour, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

Performance must be acknowledged and respected. Performance oriented distribution of income and property is fair. Property commits: those earning above average or owning more property than others must also contribute more to the welfare of society.

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

Democratic Socialism

Our history is shaped by the idea of democratic socialism, a society of free and equal people where our core values are realized. It requires a structure in economy, state and society guaranteeing civil, political, social and economic basic rights for all people living a life without exploitation, suppression and violence, hence in social and human security.

The end of the soviet type state socialism did not disprove the idea of democratic socialism but it clearly confirmed the orientation of social democracy towards core values. In our understanding democratic socialism remains the vision of a free and fair society in solidarity. Its realization is a permanent task for us. The principle for our actions is social democracy.

Primacy of Politics and the Principle of sustainability

Since we are abiding by this aim we are insisting in the primacy of democratic policy rejecting the subordination of political to economic interests. In doing so we are applying a wide notion of the political domain which must not be reduced to the state but includes alliances and networks of civil society but also free action of people in self-determination. Politics must guarantee that certain goods are not reduced to mere commodities: law, security, education, health, culture and natural environment.

In future democracy will have to stand the test by guaranteeing access to these public goods by keeping political responsibility for welfare enabling fair distribution of opportunities in life. This is needed more than ever before in a world of scarce resources, therefore it must not be left to market forces.

In our understanding markets are a necessary form of economic coordination superior to other ones. However, a market left to itself is blind in social and ecological terms. It is not able by itself to provide public goods in sufficient quantity. Markets need rules, a state able to apply sanctions, efficient laws and fair prices to develop its positive efficiency.

In view of the challenges of the 21st century, in view of globalization and ecological crisis we consider sustainability the sole core principle of political and economic action. The principle of sustainability means thinking in terms of the future, resisting the primacy of short-term orientation giving preference to economy purely based on the logics of business management. It means applying the concept of society shaping politics and democratic variety, ecological sustainability, social integration and cultural participation as guiding concepts of social democratic policy.

Our concept of progress in the 21st century requires the combination of social, economic and ecological responsibility aiming at qualitative growth and improving quality of life, increasing opportunities in life and individual freedom by shaping technology, scientific progress and responsible handling of limited natural resources and the unlimited possibilities of human creativity.

Politics of Social Democracy

The Social Democrats are contrasting the economically curtailed concept of society with the image of people oriented towards human values of equal dignity and respect. People are not only competing with each other, they also need one another. They do not gain sense in life through commodities they can buy on markets. People are more than consumers and producers, therefore we are rejecting economization of all spheres of life.

Quality in life is more than chasing material wealth. People want intact communities where people act peacefully and in solidarity, where equal opportunities and rights are valid, even

between the genders. People search recognition and the feeling to be needed, not only at the workplace. They live in and through relations in the family, with partners, children and friends. For this they need time. People are only really rich in a society giving them more free time in self-determination. A life exclusively following the rules of the stopwatch in the rhythm of uninterrupted availability is contradictory to this concept.

We want a society in which dynamism and innovation create progress, but at the same time we want to maintain and strengthen the foundations of human cohesion. Individuality and the chance for various options in life are supreme values but they can also cause loss of cohesion and new conflicts. Lack of transparency is the reverse side of variety and social change increasing the longing for support and orientation. With our contribution we want to give people the feeling of acceptance and belonging to feel safe.

The Social Democrats are not only guaranteeing civil, political and cultural basic rights for all people but also social and economic rights. This safeguards equal social participation of all by social democratization, especially by codetermination, by the preventive social welfare state based on civil rights, and by a coordinated market economy guaranteeing the precedence of democracy over markets.

3. Our aims, our policy

3.1 A peaceful and fair world

The international policy of the German Social Democratic Party aims at preventing conflicts and creating peace. Our principles for this aim are mutual understanding, international solidarity and common security by cooperation. We are favouring the conviction that power must be subjected to law.

For the first time in its history humanity can solve central problems only together. Comprehensive security can only be achieved together. This requires developing a world domestic policy with strong United Nations and creating a fair world economic order. Europe shall play a key role in the attempt to reach both aims. The European Union must become our political response to globalization.

Social democrats want all nations, peoples and human beings to benefit from peace and wealth. The SPD want to make sure that cooperation becomes the keyword of the new century.

Social Democrats are aware of Germany's growing responsibility for peace in the world. We are actively adopting this international role. The SPD is a peace force in Germany and Europe. We are rejecting any form of wars of aggression and prevention.

The indivisibility and universal validity of all human rights are non-negotiable for us. Our Basic Law, the European Charter of Basic Rights, the Charter of the United Nations, the General Declaration of Human Rights, the International Humanitarian Law and the Millennium Development Goals are the guidelines for our international policy. Capital punishment shall be banned worldwide.

It is not the law of the strongest but the strength of law creating international security. In the global era any state trying to enforce its interests unilaterally cannot be successful in the long run. We are supporting multilateralism, hence organized cooperation of states. We are linking up with Willy Brandt's successful détente policy in Europe with crucial elements like common security, confidence building measures and both economic and civil cooperation. We are pleading for a new détente policy enabling comprehension and peaceful conflict solution avoiding armament.

We are grounding our international policy on a comprehensive concept of security. Security for all people requires peace, justice and freedom, democracy as well as social, economic, cultural and sustainable development.

Towards other peoples we are acting in a spirit of friendship, openness and respect. We recognize that many civilizations contributed to the cultural heritage of humankind. We clearly reject people evoking clashes of civilizations. Foreign cultural policy is part of good foreign policy creating interest and understanding for our own country promoting a dialogue with other countries.

Since the end of the East-West conflict a new security architecture for the global age has not yet developed. New powers want to climb up onto the world stage and play their roles. Our foreign, security and development policy must develop close relations with countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. They are partners in the construction of a fair world order.

Germany has special responsibility for Israel's right to exist. For this reason too we have committed ourselves to comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of international agreements. We are supporting self-determination of the Palestinian people and the creation of a viable Palestinian state.

The SPD wants to renew the transatlantic partnership. Germany, Europe and the United States of America are sharing common values. On this foundation we also cooperate closely in NATO. After the collapse of communism, however, the Transatlantic Alliance needed a new orientation towards the global age. A peaceful world order can only be achieved together with the United States, therefore our relations to them have special weight.

Friendship and cooperation between Germany and France have always been the engine of European unification with its own inherent value even in future. We also want to strengthen our relation with Poland in the same way.

Strategic partnership with Russia is indispensable for Germany and the European Union. Russia's opening to Europe safeguards peace and stability on our continent.

Strengthening global and regional cooperation

To achieve peace in the world common interests, alliances and organizations need to be strengthened. For this reason we want to strengthen the United Nations to become the supreme instance of a global legal system. We want to create and enforce global law. For this purpose international jurisdiction must be strengthened. International law will only become binding able to solve conflicts if sanctions can be enforced.

In order to strengthen the legitimization of the United Nations its institutions must be reformed and democratized. We want to strengthen the rights of the UN General Assembly and the Secretary General. Appropriate participation by all continents must be safeguarded in each reform of the UN Security Council. We reject the veto rights of individual member states. Germany should accept more tangible responsibility in the United Nations, also by a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. In the long run the European Union must get a permanent seat in this body.

We are pleading for a Global Council of the United Nations for economic, social and environmental policy. It shall coordinate economic interests, social needs and ecological necessities, and it shall help to limit the risks of uncontrolled capital movements as well as social and ecological dumping. All regions and international trade and finance institutions shall be represented by high-ranking officials in this Council.

Peace and security are global public goods. Therefore financial and economic stability, warding off the climate disaster, safeguarding the eco systems and protecting from epidemics are global political tasks. The international community of states must raise the necessary funds in their own interest enabling the United Nations to take its responsibility.

Uncontrolled capital movements on the finance markets may jeopardize entire national economies. We are aiming at an efficient structural framework for the finance markets at international level.

International institutions and organizations like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization must be measured with the yardstick of economic, social and ecological sustainability, human rights and the rights of working people. Their decisions must be transparent. The distribution of votes must more strongly consider the interests of developing countries, especially the poorest ones.

We want to strengthen the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Core Labour Standards of the ILO must be anchored and considered more strongly in decisions of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

As regional international organizations the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) are models for overcoming antagonisms among peoples. Germany will support the establishment of similar organizations even in other regions of the world.

Organizations in civil society play an important role in international understanding. We consider ourselves partners of the International Trade Union Confederation, the Non-Governmental Organizations and the churches repeatedly directing the focus on international conflicts and developing approaches for solutions.

We are supporting a stronger role of the Socialist International (SI) as transnational alliance of social democratic parties in the world capable of politics. It must play an important role in the democratization of international politics especially in forming a global public.

Comprehensive Security Policy

Peace means more to us than the absence of war. Peace is the principal foundation for a civilized development of our global society. Crisis prevention is the most efficient policy to overcome root causes of conflicts like famine, poverty and lack of resources. War shall not be a means of politics.

In our understanding a fair world economic order and development cooperation in partnership are not only a necessity of humankind but building blocks of a comprehensive security policy. Step by step we therefore want to increase our funds to fight poverty and underdevelopment to 0,7 percent of the gross domestic product by 2015. Fighting corruption, promoting good governance, fighting AIDS/HIV and epidemics, as well as systematic debt relief of developing countries are important aims in the fight against poverty.

In many societies women are bearing the main responsibility for social and economic development. Without equal participation of women in the entire world democracy, global justice and sustainable development are impossible.

We need more justice in world trade. The developing countries do not want alms – instead they want fair opportunities on the markets. To this end the industrialized countries within the scope of the World Trade Organization must open their markets by gradually reducing and finally stopping the subsidization of their agricultural exports.

Disarmament and non-proliferation

Increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction requires a new policy of efficient arms control, arms limitation and disarmament. We are supporting the removal of all nuclear warheads stored on German ground. We underscore our aim of a world without nuclear weapons, campaigning for international monitoring of uranium enrichment. We want to enforce an international, legally binding ban on the use of nuclear weapons. Space must be free from weapons. We are also dedicating increased efforts to the limitation and control of conventional arms. Regarding disarmament we favour strengthening of multilateral treaties. Production and exportation of land mines and cluster bombs must be prohibited.

In future too, we shall make sure that Germany does not aim at producing, owning and utilizing weapons of mass destruction. We are committed to strict arms export policy. Arms are no ordinary commodities. Compliance with human rights, good governance and a ban on arms delivery to conflict regions are decisive criteria for export licenses. Arms exports to developing countries shall be rejected since they jeopardize the sustainable development of countries.

Responsibility for security and peace

Scarce resources and climate disasters have an enormous conflict potential. Climate protection and access to energy, raw materials and water are outstanding issues of global security in the global era. Renewable energies and improved energy efficiency are keys to peaceful development.

The decay of states leads to the dissemination of anarchy and lawlessness. Germany must be prepared to take responsibility in reestablishing statehood and structures of civil society.

The most dangerous form of denationalized violence is terrorism. The struggle against terror is not war but fighting crime. This is the task of police, judiciary and secret services. Only when they are overstrained in the international fight against terrorism will the military be the last option. Even in view of terrorism we are rejecting any softening up of international law.

Conflict solving by military means must be the last resort. Therefore we are favouring a peace policy based on preventing conflicts.

Federal Army missions must always be embedded in a concept of political, diplomatic, economic and cultural measures as well as development policy. Therefore we want to increase the funds for civil crisis prevention and crisis response improving the instruments for such a policy. In our understanding the use of military means is always the last resort. Even for peace stabilization we want to deploy soldiers only if other means do not suffice.

Germany may take part in such missions if they are legitimized by an internationally binding mandate of the United Nations, if the missions do not contrast with Germany's interest in world peace and welfare of the nation and if the Federal Parliament approves them.

By overcoming Europe's division and with Germany's unification the Federal Army accepted more responsibility within the scope of our cooperative peace and security policy. Soldiers are enjoying high confidence and respect worldwide because of the way they present themselves. Their anchor and the acceptance of the Federal Army in society must be maintained. Modernizing the concept of universal conscription will guarantee this. Therefore we favour strengthening the voluntary concept of army service.

Every person has the right to reject active duty for reasons of conscience. This right shall be enforced also internationally.

3.2 Social and democratic Europe

As early as in 1925 the Social Democrats stood up for European unity with their demand for the United States of Europe. A concept which seemed to be out of reach at that time has become reality: Europe's unification after two World Wars has brought the most peaceful period in the history of our continent. War, expulsion and famine have been overcome. The European Union is primarily a peace project, we want to expand it to become a functioning peace power. Europe, however, is also a democratic and social community of values. The European model of society combines economic progress, social equilibrium and individual freedom. It provides guidelines for the equality of women and men and guarantees minority rights. Social Democrats are favouring a tolerant Europe understanding and nurturing its various nations and regions, cultures and religions as precious goods.

Where the nation state is no longer able to provide the markets with social and ecological frameworks the European Union has to take over.

The European Union must become our response to globalization.

Democratic Europe

The European Union has gained traits of its own statehood. More and more areas of life are affected by European decisions. We want to create a Europe of the citizens. We want to venture more European democracy.

Our model is a political union granting all European citizens democratic rights of participation. The democratic Europe needs a government answerable to parliament on the foundation of a European constitution.

We want a federal Europe in which the nation states are involved in European legislation together with the European Parliament.

Matters affecting people only locally in one region or one country shall be handled within the respective political scope to take decisions close to the citizens. This principle must not be eroded by European law.

Competences of the European Parliament must be strengthened. This is the only way to take part in European legislation on equal footing with national governments under the umbrella of the Council of Ministers.

The European Parliament needs comprehensive parliamentary rights of control versus the European Commission as well as the right to undertake its own legislative initiatives. The President of the European Commission shall be elected by the European Parliament.

European democracy requires a European public scope. European media, organizations of civil society, social partners, but even strong European political parties are indispensable for this. Our aim is to develop the Social Democratic Party of Europe to become a functioning members' and programme party. We are favouring the elaboration of a programme of social democratic principles for Europe. In the elections to the European Parliament we want to present a pan-European candidate.

Enabling the European Union to become a real democratic organization must not fail because of lacking will of individual states or their governments. Therefore it may adopt the form of increased cooperation of some member states. This cooperation must remain open for all member states.

Social Europe

Europe has created the largest single market in the world and even introduced its common currency. This happened in the interest of Europe's citizens. Neither in Germany nor in Europe, however, we shall accept that market economy leading us into a market society. After the Europeanization of the fiscal and monetary policy we are pleading for growth and employment oriented coordination of economic, fiscal and monetary policy. This requires generally binding economic rules.

The European Social Union must be juxtaposed to the Economic and Monetary Union on equal footing. There are various national traits and traditions of the European Social Model. Common ground for all social states in Europe, however, are efficient states, social systems providing security for elementary risks in life, high standard of education, public welfare, regular working conditions as well as rights of participation and codetermination of workers.

The European Social Union respects traditions of the nation state and at the same time creates binding European rules and standards member states must not fall below. We do not want to make social systems uniform but agree on a Social Stability Pact with other member states. For the agreement on a Social Stability Pact we are suggesting aims and targets for national social and educational expenditures orientated to economic performance capability.

Where economic activity crosses borders workers' rights must not come to a halt at them. Therefore we want to safeguard and enhance codetermination of the workforce in European corporations. In order to strengthen and enforce the autonomy of collective bargaining at European level we are favouring a European legal foundation for cross-border collective bargaining and collective labour agreements.

To prevent the financial collapse of nation states due to competition about the lowest corporation taxes we want European-wide minimum rates and a uniform assessment basis.

Free access to supreme public services belongs to the European social model. Each member state cares for it in its own way but its principles should become binding for the European Union.

For their future's sake the members of the European Union must invest in education, research and innovation. These foci must also be mirrored in the European budget. We are pleading for lower assignments from the national budgets and in favour of long-term development of separate European sources of income. However, this requires transparent, effective and democratically controlled budget policy of the European Union.

In order to enable young people to experience Europe and to strengthen our common European identity we favour opportunities for all adolescents to familiarize themselves with everyday life in other European countries by means of exchange programmes and events for young people.

Peace power Europe

We are striving for further development of the European Union to become a functioning peace power. Independent European peace policy must focus on its strengths: diplomacy, dialogue and support of democracy and human rights, also by means of assistance to economic cooperation in conflict regions.

Europe has congruent security interests. We are aiming at common foreign, security and defence policy. Therefore member state armies must also grow together more closely. In the long run we want a European army whose missions shall be legitimized by Parliament.

The Union's enlargement has created peace, stability and wealth. We are standing up for the fulfilment of promises to countries provided with a perspective for accession and fulfilling criteria. This also applies to Turkey. Turkey, if committed to European values, may become an important bridge to other Islamic states. This is also in the interest of Germany and Europe.

For states of the region which cannot join the Union even on a mid term basis we continue the European neighbourhood policy.

3.3 Civil society based on solidarity and democratic state

Democracy lives by its citizens' commitment. Therefore we want a strong and vital civil society where people make use of their freedom of opinion and association. The democratic state is the political self-organization of the citizens.

A lively civil society may and is supposed to control, correct, stimulate, relieve and complement state action. It cannot substitute it. Only where the state fulfils its obligations can a vital civil society form itself.

A strong civil society offers shelter in times of stormy change. Where people stand up for each other they will experience sense of responsibility and justice, mutual recognition, solidarity and reasonable use of individual freedom. Democracy depends on such learned and lived democratic virtues.

In a civil society people take responsibility in their own initiative acting on behalf of public interest. Many times they realize earlier than authorities where remedy is needed. They work voluntarily in clubs, foundations, initiatives and non-governmental organizations. We want to couch voluntary functions in more recognition and enhanced security. A culture of non-profit donation shall make society multi-faceted and give it a more humane appearance.

Other pillars of civil society are political parties, trade unions, churches, religious communities as well as social and environmental associations. They are our partners on the way to a humane and future oriented society.

Sports are an important part of our culture. It is beneficial for health, imparts tolerance and fairness, ties people together and helps to overcome social antagonisms. Therefore we promote mass sports, high-performance sports and sports of the disabled and their clubs. This includes the fight against doping.

Authoritarian and totalitarian rule discredited the state in the 20th century. This is used by market radicals having the intention to reduce the state to protecting property and organizing markets. Wherever possible they try to pass state tasks to markets. But whatever is left to markets is bound to become a commodity some can afford but others cannot. The democratic and social welfare state, supported and limited by civil society, is responsible for what is not to become a commodity.

The state is bound by law to provide education because it is not a commodity but a human right.

Security from crime must never become a commodity. It is a debt to be discharged by the state representing the reverse side of its monopoly of power.

Culture is more than a commodity, it is expression of a humane society. It is not the state that has to rule what culture is but it has to enable culture, even such culture which could not survive on the market. The state is not in charge of truth, neither philosophical nor religious nor historical truth but it is in charge of conditions apt to find truth.

Social security is not a commodity but task of the state committed to the dignity of human-kind.

The state's task is to set law and thus setting and enforcing binding rules. Legalization of all wakes of life without any gaps, however, does not bring more justice. Deregulation is repeatedly required where outmoded rules become shackles. Deregulation as a principle, however, contradicts the purpose of any state.

The democratic constitutional state may and must subject any power to law, even its own. This legitimates its monopoly of power. We shall defend this monopoly of power because society is most unfair where some can buy security but most cannot.

The SPD stands up for an efficient and citizen oriented welfare system in public responsibility. The state does not have to provide all services itself, instead it shall guarantee access to public goods.

Privatization may be purposeful and responsible. However, we are rejecting privatization when it obstructs access to public goods questioning the monopoly of state power. Where public tasks shall be privatized we do not only ask about the short-term benefit for public coffers but also about future creative power and democratic responsibility of politics. We do not want to open core areas of public welfare to profit-making interests of global capital markets.

Direct participation of citizens by census and memorandum also serves the purpose of linking the activating state with active civil society. Within legal limits they shall complement parliamentary democracy, not only in municipalities and Federal States but also at national level. Where the Constitution sets limits for parliamentary majority this also applies to memorandums.

Most citizens meet the state in the guise of its administration. Therefore we need an administration in the neighbourhood of citizens serving their needs. We are doing away with useless bureaucracy. We do not want a guardian state.

Democratic parties have a key role in political will formation. They are indispensable mediators between civil society and state. They shall translate citizens' concerns into issues for political action. They are schools for political debate with the responsibility to make sure that the electorate may vote for women and men grown in local councils and parliaments. Democracy needs strong, vital parties capable of decision-making, just the same like strong parliaments. Parliaments are the hearts of democratic will formation.

Strong communities

Civil society based on solidarity finds its place mainly in local communities. They shape social welfare and everyday life of people. It is in the communities where the decision is taken whether all children get support in their early childhood. Here we observe whether people of various cultures are living together or in parallel. Here it becomes apparent whether adolescents organize their leisure time in a meaningful way, if the elderly remain integrated and if people feel safe in public places. This applies to rural areas and big cities likewise. It is the local and regional sphere of life with its unique history and culture offering a home, community and security in change.

Therefore we are strengthening local self-government improving its quality and enlarging its freedom of organization. We are enlarging the communities' financial scope for action without conferring tasks on them void of funds needed.

Social municipal policy

More than half the population is already living in conurbations. The future of the cities decides on the future of society. Organizing the living together of people with different origin, social situation and life orientation is task of a social municipal policy. Guideline for our policy is a city in solidarity where all inhabitants are invited to active contribution in social, economic and cultural life.

Inhabited city centres can only be maintained and strengthened if there is sufficient affordable living space. Living space must not become object of speculation. Keeping both elderly people and families with children in city centres is condition for a lively city.

The aim of social democratic policy is to improve cohesion in cities and quarters. We want to promote multi-generation forms of living without barriers. To keep cities viable when they become older we want to tap potentials of active old age and promote civil commitment especially of older citizens. Processes of abasement and exclusion in neighbouring city quarters must be prevented. Interlinked concepts and joint action is needed for more jobs, strengthened integration and participation as well as improved access to education and skill development. The "social city" is a cross-sectional task for all areas of politics.

The social federation

The Federal Republic has always been a social federation. In the federal system there is subsidiarity: only if the smaller unit is not able to perform will the larger take over. We profess this federation because it lives up to German tradition, prevents consolidation of power, makes abuse of power more difficult and enables democratic will formation at all levels.

We want functioning states in a functioning federation with clear responsibilities. Best conceivable task fulfilment must be guideline for separating competences instead of clinging to them by all means.

Differences in the economic and financial strength of regions and Federal States have increased. Our guideline is equality of living conditions. Therefore we are favouring the obligation to assist in solidarity between all parts of Germany, East and West, South and North. Eastern Germany has the right to claim pan-German solidarity.

The federal nation state is not necessarily weakened by each conference of decision-making power to the EU. This also applies to taxation policy. Minimum rates for corporation taxes, decided by the EU, would even strengthen it.

Security in freedom

Freedom and constitutionality are yardsticks of social democratic legal and domestic policy. In our understanding constitutionality means unconditional respect of human and civil rights by all powers of the state, granting independent jurisprudence within reach for all people. People need security. They can even use their freedom only if they feel safe. The constitutional state has to care for security. In Germany it is jeopardized by crime through extremists and terrorists, even organized in international networks. We fight it with the means of the constitutional state. Police and judiciary are immediately responsible for it. We reject domestic missions of the Federal Army. People who want to ward off enemies of the constitutional state must never abandon its principles. It is not the defence of civil rights and rights to freedom but their restriction which requires justification. The prohibition of arbitrariness and torture applies in absolute terms. However, we shall only win the fight against violence, hatred and crime if we fight its root causes with the same consistency.

We are granting the right of self-determination by information standing up for effective data protection.

Social Democrats are ostracizing rightwing extremism, racism and antisemitism. They led Germany into its worst disaster. Our constant fight shall therefore make sure that our country shall never again slip into barbarism.

Any form of violence, by whichever form of motivation, is an assault on our civil society in solidarity, be it violence among men or violence at home against women and children. Forced marriage, forced prostitution and so-called murders of honour must be prevented and persecuted.

There is no space for extremism substantiated by religion. Even by referring to religious rules or tradition human rights cannot be put out of force. Here we draw our separating line of tolerance versus other cultures.

Integration and immigration

Germany is a country of immigration. Immigration has enriched our country in business and culture and will continue to do so, and we want to prepare our society for it. We need more qualified immigrants.

Immigration requires integration as joint effort. Both sides must be prepared for it. Immigrants must integrate themselves, and we must give them all opportunities to take part in the life of our society. Therefore integration requires fair chances but also clear rules.

Our Basic Law offers space for cultural variety. Therefore nobody need to deny cultural origin. However, it also defines limits nobody must surpass even by referring to religion or tradition. Therefore nobody must prevent girls and women from developing and educating themselves in the freedom of choice.

People who want to have and use equal opportunities in Germany must learn and finally command the German language. We want to improve educational services. We hope and expect that they will be used. Integration, even by language, can succeed at best if it begins in childhood. Opportunities residing in multilingualism of immigrants shall be used.

We are aiming at nationalizing people coming to us. This is not the end of integration but it facilitates full political participation. In doing so we do not exclude multi-nationality. People who lived here for quite some years without German citizenship shall get the right to take part in local elections even if they come from non EU member states.

We are professing the basic right of asylum of politically persecuted persons. Persons fleeing from persecution or discrimination for political or gender specific reasons shall find shelter and refuge in Germany, and finally a safe stay. We are in favour of joint European refugee policy even fighting root causes of flight and expulsion.

Disabled people

A civil society in solidarity is also characterized by granting the disabled equal opportunities and participation. On the way to this aim a lot remains to be done to remove all barriers, thus offering people with disablements access to the best conceivable education, reliable gainful employment and unhampered participation in political, cultural and social life. We want to do justice to the needs of people with disablements enabling them for comprehensive participation in social life.

Public and media

Democracy needs publicity. Free media enable people to know facts, form opinions, participate in politics and monitor power. New media like Internet and mobile radio increasingly join newspapers, books, radio and television. Different types of media are amalgamating increasingly characterizing our daily lives. Handling them is a learning process. We want to make media competence a focus of education.

We are defending media independence from state intervention and economic interests of power. We do not dispense with effective self-control of the media and ethic standards of journalism. In our understanding broadcasting under public law indispensably belongs to democratic publicity as crucial corrective element versus increased commercialization of the media. We are rejecting manipulation, political bias and harm to the youth. We are fighting sexist, racist and violence adoring content.

The culture of a democratic society

From its origins social democracy has also been a cultural movement. We always had a broad notion of culture. It reaches beyond the arts and also includes education, historical heritage and forms of living together. We need a political culture supporting our democracy. In a specific way culture is the space where society ascertains its concepts of values and aims. It strengthens people, creates belonging, the awareness of being rooted and social cohesion.

We are in favour of a dialogue among cultures. It serves the purpose of domestic and external peace but also integration. If peaceful globalization shall succeed we need a culture of recognition counteracting the exclusion of minorities and the formation of parallel societies. We want cultural variety instead of fundamentalist constriction and politicization of religious and cultural differences instead of global monoculture. Only a vital culture of recognition enables a society where we can be different as human beings without fear.

Peaceful variety is only possible if we safeguard our mental roots in Jewish Christian tradition as well as Humanism and Enlightenment - influenced by Greek philosophy, Roman law and Arab culture. Only a value based and tolerant culture is able to withstand temptations of abusing culture and religion as means of exclusion. For the dialogue of religions and peaceful living together in Germany the contribution of Muslims living in Germany is indispensable.

Culture is a public good. It is the task of civil society and state to promote it. We are welcoming and supporting private civil commitment. Yet, the state has responsibility that cannot be delegated. We believe in Germany as a state of culture. It safeguards the diversity of the cultural scene, cultural education nurturing our heritage and culture of remembrance. It promotes the arts and takes responsibility for social security of freelance artists. It campaigns for our culture abroad. Promotion of culture is not subsidization but investment in the future of our democratic communities.

Churches and communities of faith and conviction

We profess the Judeo-Christian heritage of Europe and tolerance in issues of religious conviction. We defend freedom of thought, conscience, faith and proclamation. Foundation and yardstick for this is our Constitution. In our understanding the work of churches and communities of faith and conviction cannot be substituted by anything, especially where they encourage people to take responsibility for others and the community, and where they impart virtues and values characterizing democracy.

We want to talk with such organizations cooperating with them in free partnership on joint projects. We are respecting their right to organize their internal affairs autonomously within the scope of generally applicable law.

3.4 Gender equality

The Social Democrats want to build a society for women and men with equal rights and opportunities – not only on paper but in daily life. We are fighting for a society in which men and women can live together in equality, freedom and solidarity.

We want to make sure that women and men – together or separate, with family or without – can choose their ways in self-determination.

Both the SPD and the women movement have their roots in the liberation movement of the 19th century. They are linked by the concept of equal opportunities for women and men. Social democrats fought for many rights of women: they achieved the right to vote for women, equal rights in married and family life and equal access to education.

Nowadays women are self-confident and want to shape their lives according to their own ideas. The relationship between men and women is changing. An increasing number of women and men want to share occupational life and family tasks in partnership.

Equality before the law as such does not mean factual equality. Therefore we need active women promotion just like gender mainstreaming checking each political decision regarding its impact on the lives of women and men, girls and boys amending it where it is needed.

Old inequalities continue to exist especially in the world of work and occupation. Key positions in business and society are predominantly held by men. Often women receive lower wages than men despite the same qualification.

It is hard to tune demands for flexibility and availability with family and children. Especially women have to cope with both occupational and family burdens in everyday life. Sharing tasks between women and men in partnership, however, is not yet the rule. A major portion of family work is still rendered by women, often in addition to their gainful employment making real equality in occupational life even more difficult. Many times women have to choose between children and work.

With the countrywide and demand oriented expansion of care facilities for children and security in child-raising phases compatibility between work and family can be improved. In various phases in life women and men have different tasks: be it career-making, child-raising, care for family members or qualification, political or civic engagement – they need time for it. By means of flexible working time patterns we want to shape work such that work and private life can be balanced. We want more time sovereignty for women and men. Only this enables freedom of choice.

We want equal and fair participation of women and men in reliable gainful employment. Work predominantly done by women is often remunerated with lower pay. However, the same wage must be paid for the same work. We want to overcome typical separation between women's and men's occupations. This requires legal measures for equal participation of women in leading positions of corporations, administration, science and research as well as in supervisory bodies.

We want to reshape tax law such that women searching gainful employment do not consider it a hurdle. It shall no longer be in the way of their occupational emancipation.

If we want to achieve equal participation of women and men we must reshape all spheres of life. If we want a humane society we need to overcome the male dominated society.

3.5 Sustainable development and qualitative growth

Wealth and high quality of life have always been priorities in the Social Democrats' economic policy. In the past progress was mainly understood in terms of quantitative growth. Nowadays we are forced by rapid climate change, overstrain of the eco systems and growth of the world population to give development a new future oriented direction to turn development into progress. We want sustained progress by combining economic dynamism, social justice and ecological responsibility. This requires qualitative growth in combination with reduced consumption of resources. People shall have a chance to earn their own living by good work without fearing exploitation. Every person shall receive a fair share in wealth creation. We want to safeguard the natural foundations of life also for future generations.

We are favouring scientific and economic progress, education and qualification to enable sustainable development. The precondition for qualitative growth is competitive national economy with high productivity and value added. This creates the foundation to overcome poverty, exploitation and waste of natural resources.

In our understanding globalization brings opportunities for new jobs and worldwide development of wealth. The dynamism of markets shall serve humankind. This requires structured competition triggering longterm growth, overcoming the focus on short term profit.

Social market economy in the 21st century

In the 20th century the social market economy has become our outstanding model for success. It combines economic strength with wealth for broad strata of society. Social market economy, predominantly shaped by social democrats and trade unions, turned participation and codetermination of workers into a productive force promoting social peace.

However, global finance and capital markets without borders are challenging this tested structure. Orientating exclusively towards short term and excessive profits blindly jeopardizes social cohesion and economic necessities. At the same time it undermines longterm economic success of our corporations and our national economy.

Markets need to be shaped by politics, in the era of globalization and beyond national borders. Our guideline is to have as much competition as possible and as much regulation by the state as necessary. Joint action in the European Union is of crucial importance for the future of social market economy.

Economic democracy is indispensable to fill the postulate of our Basic Law with life: „Property commits. Its use shall also serve the general wellbeing.”

Codetermination at the shopfloor and in corporations, freedom of collective bargaining and the right to strike are basic elements of social market economy. Shopfloor democracy means participating by having a say. It promotes entrepreneurial success. We are professing parity codetermination in supervisory boards of large corporations. In an increasingly Europeanized economy our aim is to increase workers' rights and codetermination at European level.

In our understanding strong trade unions are indispensable. When shaping working conditions we abide by the tested division of tasks between legislator, parties to collective labour agreements as well as works and personnel councils. Freedom of collective bargaining applies without any restriction. We want to strengthen industry wide collective agreements. We are safeguarding workers' rights including protection against unlawful dismissal.

There is no fair distribution of income and property in Germany. The Social Democrats' tax policy shall limit imbalances and promote equal opportunities. We are supporting wage increases oriented towards productivity growth and inflation. We want to put more capital into the hands of the workforce. Participation of workers in corporative capital as an additional source of income grants fairer participation of the workforce in their company's success. It also promotes innovation and productivity. Conferring entrepreneurial risk to the workforce can be prevented by establishing inter-company funds.

Additional jobs are mainly created where creative people realize their ideas and take them to the market. We are improving conditions for new business establishments as well as for small and medium-sized enterprises, crafts and self-employed people. Strong small and medium-sized business establishments strengthen value added. Non-profit companies and cooperatives are crucial parts of social market economy.

In our understanding entrepreneurial freedom and social responsibility are two sides of the same coin. Social democratic policy promotes responsible entrepreneurship by means of fair competition. We want a culture of self-employment in Germany. We want to create more social security for low income free lance, crafts and trades people.

Modern service policy

Not all jobs in Germany are facing international competition in the same way. However, highly skilled and simple services for people in education and health, local crafts, private households and social services offer the largest employment potentials. To tap them we need more public and private demand for such services. A higher share of gainful employment of women and men will also strengthen the demand for such services.

Strategic and ecological industry policy

Humanity is facing major social and ecological challenges. We need innovative and high-quality products and services to overcome them. We are favouring better ideas, new technologies and processes, specialization and quality. This enables economic use of resources and energy saving, fighting the climate change, healing diseases, improving mobility and facilitating communication.

The state is not able to and shall not substitute markets. However, it can provide guiding markets with impulses. It must set priorities for industry policy and focus on strategic fields in partnership with business and science. The state must bundle its funds and instruments, from research and targeted regulation through to procuring specific products.

Industry still is of decisive importance for the German national economy. Many services, both qualified and simple ones, directly depend on industry. Industrial products will increasingly build on knowledge and services. Strategic industry policy favours the qualitative lead of our business locations. It strengthens industrial centres and regional economic competences. Even the growth centres in the new Federal States illustrate how knowledge can be turned into new economic strength. We want to strengthen this development in the East in cooperation with the EU just the same like regional economic promotion and regionalized structural policy all over Germany.

Strategic industrial policy must be ecological industrial policy. Ecological market incentives are drivers of qualitative growth. Our chance is to develop problem solutions which can be applied worldwide. To coin new products rapidly into new products and jobs we want a policy closely interlinking research, product engineering and entrepreneurial investment.

Functioning state and active growth policy

Social democracy needs a functioning state. Only rich people can afford a poor state. The state needs sufficient reliable income to shape by political means.

In our understanding sound finance policy means that today we should not live at the cost of future generations. However, we must not leave weak infrastructures to coming generations due to excessive consolidation of public budgets. Our obligation to future generations means lowering the indebtedness of public budgets and at the same time investing more money in education, research and infrastructure.

Corporations and private households must take part in funding state tasks in line with their performing capability. This means that we are professing the tested progressive income tax. We want fair taxation of large capital and inheritance.

We want to finance social welfare systems more through taxes than by levies on all types of income.

High domestic demand creates more employment. Therefore it is not only fair but also economically necessary to orientate wage increases at least to productivity and inflation. We need minimum wages to avoid exploitation and safeguard fair competition.

Our fiscal and monetary policy in Germany and Europe is targeted to consolidating the business cycle and promoting strong consistent growth. By means of national and international stabilization policy the state must care for overcoming crises of the business cycle. The public sector must spend money to provide impulses for the business cycle and to enable the entire society to benefit from it. Sustainable growth development requires consistent increase of public investment in education, research and infrastructure.

Capital and finance markets: using opportunities, controlling risks

A modern, globally interlinked national economy requires well-functioning finance and capital markets. We want to tap the potentials of capital markets for qualitative growth. Our policy grants young innovative enterprises better access to venture capital.

If finance markets only want to generate short-term profits they jeopardize long-term growth strategies of enterprises which destroys jobs. By means of tax and shareholder law, among other things, we want to strengthen investors focussing on long-term commitments instead of quick profit. We need rules for investors and funds preventing lopsided profit orientation to the detriment of the long-term substance of enterprises. With increasing international inter-linkage of commodities and finance markets their international regulation becomes increasingly crucial. Stable national and international finance markets are important public goods.

We want joint action with other states and international institutions to improve predictability of legal decisions and trust. By means of clear rules and efficient supervision risks to stability and erroneous development doing damage to national economy shall be prevented. Wherever possible we want to support this by national tax and stock corporation law.

For small and medium-sized enterprises small banks and savings banks play a decisive role. Therefore we want to maintain their specific role. Numerous banks in Germany, mainly savings banks and cooperative banks, are characterized by longterm enterprise funding. In addition, with their orientation towards the common weal, the savings banks fulfil a crucial social task. Therefore, even in future, they must stay under public law. We want to strengthen this precious pillar of our competitiveness.

Knowledge and ideas as productive forces

Inventiveness, good ideas and innovations deriving from them are the most important productive forces of our country. Developing them and caring for skilled workforce we consider a major joint task of enterprises, trade unions and politics.

Product and brand piracy are not only harmful for economy and its innovative strength, they also endanger consumers by goods of minor quality. Therefore we want to protect intellectual property and safeguard copyright. This includes the freedom to offer one's own intellectual property to the public.

Creative business is gaining importance. In our opinion the recipe for more innovation, creativity and value creation is the right combination of technology, talent and tolerance. In Germany we must create an atmosphere of openness for new ideas and influence by unconventional thinkers.

Not every innovation means progress. Therefore we are checking whether it is beneficial for free development, dignity, security and togetherness of people. This also applies to bio and gene technology as well as new developments in medicine. In some areas they take us to ethical boundaries. Therefore researching and applying them requires ethical reflection and a broad debate. We want to discuss this issue with scientists as well as with the churches and communities of faith. The dignity of human life in all its phases must not be violated. We abide by the prohibition of targeted genetic intervention in the human germ path.

Change in energy policy and environmental protection

Energy, just like air and water, is the living foundation of our civilization. In future we cannot waste energy and resources like now. Therefore, in our understanding, changing our energy policy is a key task of the 21st century. We are consistently driving the change from exhaustive to inexhaustive and from toxic to non-toxic resources. Our aim is the epoch of solar energy.

To combat global warming the worldwide emission of greenhouse gases must be halved by 2050. We are urging for more ambitious agreements to reduce greenhouse gases.

To many people nuclear fission seemed to be the great hope for permanently available energy. It cannot fulfil these hopes. A nuclear accident jeopardizes millions of people. Nuclear waste is a focus of hazards for thousands of years to come. In view of new terrorist threats nuclear business is a source of hazard. We are realizing the exit from nuclear power.

Renewable energies are the largest permanently available indigenous energy potentials everywhere. Increasing efficiency, saving resources and shifting to renewable energies requires varied new technologies and storage media. They are creating numerous new jobs in industry, crafts and services as well as in agriculture and forestry.

We want to move away from oil and other exhaustible energies where we rely on imports. As a bridge to the solar energy epoch we favour modern coal and gas power plants with highly efficient combined heat and power production.

In industry too we want to substitute exhaustible raw materials by renewable ones. This is primarily feasible with chemical base materials. Recycling processes save material, avoid waste and environmental damage. This can create a modern cyclical economy with sustainable opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises.

We are promoting necessary and desired mobility. We want to avoid superfluous traffic by means of better logistics and more intelligent settlement structures.

We must heavily invest in our transport infrastructure. In doing so we are favouring the most efficient ecological modes of transport and combined transport. We want modern and efficient railroad transport. It is very meaningful for Europe's cohesion. It safeguards the living quality of cities and regions. In our understanding public commuter traffic remains a public task. Networks of busses and trains must become more economical.

Technical innovations reduce antagonisms between environment and motorized individual traffic. We want to accelerate them and use opportunities of hybrid, hydrogen and fuel cell technologies with determination.

We want to maintain nature in its variety and wealth of species and considerably reduce land consumption to save space for recreation and leisure. We want effective protection of oceans and coastal regions. In our understanding nature has an inherent value, we want to learn from it and use its potentials for a better life. We are protecting the national heritage of nature.

We abide by the ethical obligation to care for animals even if this is not of immediate benefit for humankind. Wherever possible animal tests shall be avoided. Species compatible animal husbandry shall be enforced. We are combating torture of animals.

Sustainable agriculture and rural areas

The internationalization of agricultural markets continues. We want strong agriculture in Germany even in future. It shall maintain man-made landscapes, protect natural foundations of life and contribute to sustainable development of rural areas. We are promoting a type of agriculture which is apt to cover growing demands for healthy high-quality foodstuff, also from ecological production, at the same time sparing natural resources. Farmers and consumers have the right to claim cultivation free of gene technology.

We want a type of agriculture where environmentally and animal compatible production are paying. Enabling farmers to strengthen their position versus highly consolidated food retail business they need new forms of cooperation in combination with traditional organizations.

Rural areas have their own development opportunities which can be linked with sustainable cultivation. This includes tourism and renewable raw materials. Structural change in rural areas accelerated by demographic change requires adaptations in infrastructure. We want to foster inherent strengths of rural areas.

Responsibility and strength of consumers

Responsible consumers are pioneers of sustainable progress. Every person can take influence with each purchase. Individuals may be weak but the strength of consumers is increasing and their organized power is an efficient means to give economic development a better sustainable direction. Emancipated consumers prepared to buy high-quality products are creating new markets for innovative products. Therefore we want transparent conditions to know how products are created and services rendered, especially on global markets. We want active consumer policy with enhanced information rights versus enterprises offering goods of minor quality or disrespecting workers' rights. We need more transparency on the growing market of financial services. Independent consumer consultation, reliable quality criteria and comprehensive consumer enlightenment are indispensable. The public sector must play a model role with its procurement and investment decisions.

3.6 Good work for all

Every woman and every man has the right to work. Work is the key to participating in social life. It provides sense in life and recognition. Work prevents social exclusion enabling self-determined life. Unemployment, however, mostly not self-induced, impairs human dignity, it excludes and makes sick.

Every work well done deserves respect, but not every work is good work. Work belongs to a dignified life but it must also live up to human dignity.

We want work with fair pay, enabling full participation in social security systems, offering recognition, not making sick, using and enhancing gained qualifications, guaranteeing democratic participation and enabling compatibility of occupation and family. Good work also comprises self-employed forms of gainful employment. Even voluntary and socially valuable work beyond gainful employment shall be promoted.

Work for all

We want to enable good work for all people.

We do not abandon the aim of full employment, even after decades of high unemployment in Germany. We know that it is not easy to achieve this aim. Globalization is changing the labour market: on the one hand, there is an increasing supply of workers looking for employment outside their home countries. On the other hand locations – even in one and the same group of companies – are competing with each other. Often short-term company strategies are in the foreground. The constraint of permanent availability goes hand in glove with increasing precarious working conditions. Due to limited contracts, outsourcing, contract labour and the massive increase of employment for low pay there is no reliable foundation for life any more. Growing economic dynamism brings the need for people to change their jobs or even occupations and they must learn constantly.

Therefore full employment does no longer represent the unvoiced guaranty for everyone to keep the same job in the same company for a lifetime. In our understanding full employment nowadays means that every person should repeatedly get opportunities for good work and necessary qualifications for it. Necessary and desired times for qualification and further training, child raising and family work, for voluntary and political work shall find appropriate recognition and get social security in social solidarity.

Work in Germany will not end. Existing and new potentials shall be used.

The Social Democrats' policy for full employment is based on four pillars: first, high qualitative growth, lead in innovative products and specific employment dynamism in the service sector leading to higher job supply. Second, by means of coordinated labour market, education, equal opportunities and family policy, the preventive social welfare state supports people in coping with transitions and interruptions in their gainful biographies and in maintaining their capability to be employed. Third, for people without perspective on the first labour market, specific jobs are required for publicly promoted work oriented towards public interest. Fourth, modern working time policy is required promoting flexibility and self-determination bringing more people into employment also by reducing working time.

Participating by having a say

Together with the trade unions we are fighting for a fair share of the workforce in the yield of social work and the right of codetermination in economic and social life. Freedom of collective bargaining is a precious good. In Germany employers and employees decide on wages and

working conditions in their own responsibility. This remains untouched. We want strong and functioning trade unions able to strike representing large parts of the workforce.

In view of increasing influence of the finance markets the workforce's democratic rights of codetermination regarding corporative decisions must be strengthened. In the changing world of work shopfloor codetermination must be strengthened. Rights of codetermination must be anchored at European level.

Fair participation in economic profit is a rule of social justice and economic reason. We want wage increases oriented towards productivity and price increases. Since the gap between income from gainful employment and return on capital is widening we want to put more capital formation in the hands of the workforce.

People in full time employment shall be able to earn a living with their wages. We are fighting for minimum wages in Germany and Europe guaranteeing a living. They must be enforced by collective agreements and law.

Our aim still is: equal wage for equal work, for both women and men.

Security in change

Only if people have reliable perspectives in life can they fully develop their talents and performance capability. Good work combines flexibility and security.

More flexibility is required due to rapid change in scientific and technical progress, ever faster change in the world of work and enhanced competition. At the same time this offers more opportunities for an individual lifestyle. Constant learning is gain. New vocational experience is enriching. People want to develop their own talents. Having more sovereignty regarding their own time is something worth striving for to most people. People have a right to free time.

To combine freedom and flexibility and to grant security in change we want to develop a modern working time policy and reshape unemployment insurance to become employment insurance.

Modern working time policy is feasible in different forms: by abolishing extra working hours, safe working time accounts and flexible forms of working time reduction. In addition there are socially desired and individually chosen phases of child raising, further education and training, care dedicated to family members or time out. We need to promote in solidarity what is needed by society.

Therefore our social systems must be more efficiently adapted to changing biographies of gainful employment. Employment insurance shall safeguard vocational transitions and interruptions of gainful employment, and it shall guarantee further training and education in all wakes of life. For this purpose we shall enforce the right to further education and training. This shall widen opportunities of choice and maintain the ability to be employed.

Humanizing the world of work is a permanent task. Bad working conditions and high pressure to perform jeopardize the quality of work but also the health of the workforce. Health and safety at work shall be improved. Working conditions must orientate towards the needs of an ageing workforce.

Necessary immigration and growing freedom of the workforce must not lead to social and wage dumping. Law and order on the labour market guarantee good work. We are combating illegal work.

Flexibility may be required and desired but it must not be abused. We want to strengthen unlimited and socially safe working relations. We want to overcome precarious work to prevent workers from being unprotected.

Good work includes guaranteed workers' rights: codetermination, works constitution, freedom of collective bargaining, industry wide collective agreements, protection from unlawful dismissal are indispensable.

3.7 The preventive social welfare state

The social welfare state is a great achievement of the 20th century. It combines civil rights of freedom with social civil rights. Therefore democracy and social welfare state belong together. The social welfare state freed millions of people from the shackles of their origin, protected them from hardships of the market and opened opportunities for a life in self-determination. It is a decisive foundation for economic dynamism creating our wealth.

The social welfare state is organized in solidarity between the strong and weak, the young and old, the healthy and sick, people in work and the unemployed, the non-disabled and disabled. Even in future the foundation of the social welfare state guarantees social security and participation, sueable legal claim for social benefits and workers' rights.

Global capitalism is widening the gap between rich and poor. Even in our society social antagonisms are enhanced. Some countries accept this as a fact of destiny. However, successful social welfare states protect people from poverty enabling social rise.

When forms of employment become more flexible and often times also more precarious the central function of the social welfare state becomes even more important: guaranteeing security in change. Fear from social decline is paralyzing. Only people with security will accept risks. Only people with opportunities will make an effort.

To renew the promise of security and rise in our time we are developing the social welfare state to become a preventive welfare state. It combats poverty enabling people to master their lives in self-determination. Preventive social policy promotes safe gainful employment, helps in child raising and favours health prevention. It shapes demographic change and promotes a higher quota of women's gainful employment. It prevents exclusion and eases occupational integration. It never discharges people from responsibility for their own life. The preventive social welfare state conceives education as central element of social policy.

The integration of all people in society is one supreme task of the preventive social welfare state. Therefore preventive social policy combines various tasks like economic, finance and labour market policy, education and health policy, family and equal opportunities' policy and the integration of immigrants.

The central aims of the preventive social welfare state are security, participation and emancipation.

Security means protecting people from risks of survival, exploitation, discrimination, elementary risks in life like unemployment, disease and the need for care. At the same time security as such creates the preconditions for a life in self-determination.

Participation of all people in economic, cultural, social and political development is the aim of the Social Democrats' policy. Good education, reliable work and health, but also fair distribution of wealth are of central importance to this end. The quality of the social welfare state is not only measured with the yardstick of the amount of transfer benefits but also by granting real chances in life which must be repeatedly opened for all from the beginning.

Precondition for emancipation is security and participation. People want to shape their lives in freedom and self-determination. Nobody should experience disadvantages because of origin.

Preventive social policy wants to realize security, participation and emancipation for all – independent of social origin, gender, age or disablement.

The earlier, the more individual and efficient the principle of preventive care is applied the better the chance for the social welfare state to secure major risks to life in solidarity. The Berlin Programme of the SPD stipulated already: “Social policy does not only want to repair and help out in case of emergency but rather shape in anticipation.”

More and better social services for children, adolescents, families, the elderly and disabled are key to a society not excluding anyone. We want to lay the tracks for this approach in our kindergartens, schools and universities as well as in our hospitals and nursing wards. People working in social institutions have a claim to first-class qualification and promotion. People available for others in social occupations deserve recognition, respect and fair pay. Social services must not always be rendered by the state. Free welfare associations are important partners of ours, and we are especially committed to the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Industrial Welfare Organization) and the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (Industrial Samaritan Association). However, the state has the responsibility for quality and equal access to such services for all.

Justice and solidarity must also be applicable to the funding of our social welfare state. The contributions paid in solidarity by employers and employees form the foundation of our security systems even in future. We want to complement them by higher and safe tax funding with contributions by all in line with performance capability. Even for economic reasons funding of the social welfare state must be put on a broader foundation to relieve the burden on gainfully employed people. Therefore the preventive social welfare state must be oriented more towards the status of citizens than the status of gainful employment.

Health

The Social Democrats' preventive health care wants to prevent diseases, maintain health and overcome differences in health opportunities. We are aiming at healthy living conditions for all people promoting health aware behaviour. We are promoting health education from the beginning as well as statutory preventive health checks, even at child day-care facilities and schools. Each child has the right to grow up in good health.

Medical progress must be used at the same time to heal diseases and to care for people who cannot be healed in a dignified fashion. Independent of origin, age or gender the sick have the same right to participate in medical progress. We do not want a two-class society. Therefore we want the insurance of citizens in solidarity with contributions by all.

We want to apply the principles of the citizens' insurance in solidarity also in old age care insurance. For humane care in dignity family, private sphere, outpatient and inpatient treatment facilities must complement each other. People need special solidarity at the end of their lives. Every person has the right to die in dignity.

Safe and active in old age

In future people will live longer. Since people will also enjoy a longer healthy life a third extended phase in life will follow the life of gainful employment. We want to shape the transition to pension with more flexibility. In old age every person shall have the chance to take an active part in social life and in the world of work. Commitment and experience of older people enrich our country's economy, politics and culture.

Statutory pension insurance remains the pillar of poverty-proof security in old age. However, it must be complemented by corporate pensions or public schemes of private preventive care to make sure that people in their old age can maintain their standard of living.

In the long run we want to extend statutory pension insurance to all gainfully employed people. In doing so we abide by gainful employment and the duration of gainful employment as a yardstick for the amount of pension.

Pension must be related to contribution payment. We are rejecting uniform pension. We want to avoid poverty in old age. The introduction of basic security was an important step to this end. In addition there must be old age security for women.

Preventive social policy in municipalities

Good preventive social policy is filled with life in communities in the first place – in high quality kindergartens and schools in an attractive living environment with many services for the integration of immigrants, for employment and qualification, for sports, recreation and health. We are supporting a policy for social communities developing suburbs and communities in this understanding. In doing so, the readiness of citizens for togetherness, self-help and accepting responsibility need to be encouraged.

The task of municipalities is to provide appropriate assistance for people in specific emergency situations.

We are supporting the efforts undertaken by municipalities to provide affordable living space. We are protecting the rights of tenants.

3.8 Better education, society suitable for children, strong families

Social participation and education were the first aims of the labour movement in the 19th century which gave birth to social democracy. An important motive of many people in the struggle for a better future was “our children shall have an easier life”. Under changing conditions of the presence these aims once again must be put into the focus of political practice.

We want equal opportunities in life for all. First and foremost education and family decide on equal opportunities in life. Therefore we want to enforce better education for all and strengthen families. Our aim is a society suitable for children.

Education is decisive for our future, it is the most crucial social issue of our time. It is education only enabling people to set goals for themselves in self-determination and to realize dreams. It enables access to a world undergoing change. It qualifies for democracy and social responsibility and repeatedly cares for participation and perspectives of social rise. It represents a fast growing productive force of economy. We want to considerably increase the number of employees with better qualification. In the global knowledge society only societies with an open, socially permeable and highly developed education system can prosper.

Education is more than imparting knowledge useful for people’s jobs. We want holistic education caring for discovery and knowledge, but also for social competences, creativity, aesthetic experience, ethical reflexion and sensitivity for values. Orientation does not necessarily derive from knowledge, therefore we need to appreciate political education and enlightenment for democracy. Education strengthens personality and qualifies for tolerance.

Knowledge increases at breathtaking speed, acquired knowledge is outmoded after short time. People have always learned for life, nowadays even a whole life long. We want to impart joy in learning and awaken openness for the results of research.

Education for all

The state has to make sure that everybody has equal access to education independent of personal origin. Every person has the right to claim an educational path free of charge from crèche and kindergarten through to university. We want to realize this. Exclusion by lacking educational opportunities is injustice.

Better education requires higher expenditures. This has priority because it invests in people.

We need a culture of second and third opportunities. If somebody gets into a dead end in the course of life there must be opportunities to gain school graduations free of charge at a later stage and to acquire occupational graduations.

From the beginning our educational system must focus on equal opportunities for girls and boys to overcome restrictive role patterns. Even for the integration of immigrants education is key. Joint learning promotes social integration. This is also true for the disabled.

We are combating illiteracy to make sure that education reaches all. We are also promoting competent, conscious and critical handling of computers, Internet and other media.

However, education always depends on people imparting it. In child daycare centres, at school or university, all of them can be more successful if they find understanding, recognition and support in society. We want to improve their training and promote their further training and education. We must care for a more balanced ratio of women and men amongst the teaching staff from crèche to university. This is the only way for boys and girls to find model roles.

Nobody can discharge parents from responsibility for their children. By means of education and care programmes we want to help them to live up to their responsibility.

Education from the beginning

Since the first weeks, months and years may be decisive for a life parents, but also midwives, physicians and nurses must be well prepared for their tasks.

Daycare centres do not only offer care but also education. We want to turn them into parent-child centres where families find counsel, further training and reliable assistance in everyday life. By means of language promotion, among other things, disadvantages due to origin shall be balanced out.

Social democrats fought for the abolition of school fees. Now we demand free of charge all day care for all children from the beginning. We are realizing the legal claim at good care from the second year in life.

Learning together

In our educational system decisions on educational paths and opportunities are taken too early. Therefore we are favouring a school system where children are learning together and from each other as long as possible. This can be achieved best in a joint school upto 10th grade.

We want to combine joint learning with better individual promotion. Experience from other countries shows that this is not only beneficial for children with learning weaknesses but also for the strong ones. Only this can overcome the correlation between educational opportunities and social background. Germany's education system needs more permeability.

We want more all day schools to transform them into locations of learning and social togetherness. Together with the family they shall become centres in the lives of children and adolescents. Parents are relieved and children have a chance to discover and develop their strengths. All day schools are embedded in a social environment, including enterprises, sports clubs, music schools, adult evening classes as well as institutions of free youth aid and the churches.

We want schools to work more independently. They get binding standards and their performance capability is regularly monitored. However, they shall also develop more creativity and competence of their own. Our model are democratic schools where not only the teaching staff but also the learners and their parents are involved in decision-making.

Modern vocational training

Vocational first training is a crucial foundation for vocational life. Broad basic training lays the foundation for lifelong vocational learning. It shall impart cross-vocational capabilities. All adolescents have right to training.

We want to upgrade the dual system. It must be modernized to keep pace with the breathtaking developments in the world of work. This shall be supported by funding models in solidarity like a levy in favour of enterprises offering training. To guarantee vocational first training for all young people we need high-quality training in public responsibility wherever the dual system does not suffice. General education must be linked more strongly with vocational education and training to prepare adolescents more efficiently to their vocational choice and requirements.

In the dual system enterprises are obliged to care for the training of future specialists. They must share the costs of training in solidarity. We are supporting funding models creating additional places for training and promoting business establishments offering places for training exceeding their own demand.

Promoting study and research

We want to improve the quality of teaching and research at our universities and create more places for studies. The state remains responsible for universities and must safeguard their funding. This also requires a financial balancing system among the Federal States. Nevertheless the universities shall keep a high level of autonomy. Everybody involved in a university's life shall have a say.

Research and teaching belong together, their unity and freedom must remain the heart of universities. They shall offer the broad range of teaching and research in their entirety. Social sciences and the Humanities shall be promoted as much as natural and technical sciences.

In recent decades research institutions outside the universities have become a strong pillar of our scientific system. We are promoting stronger cooperation between extra-university research and universities.

We want to increase open access to studies and the share of students from families distant to education. Even for people who have already obtained a vocational degree must get financial access to studies. We are rejecting study fees for first studies. Educational promotion provided by the state shall be expanded in proportion to the needs.

Study promotion must make sure that more students get a chance to make international experience. At the same time our country shall be open for students from other countries.

Further education in a learning society

We want to make further education the fourth pillar of our education system for the learning society. It also stands in public responsibility. We want to safeguard further education by funding and by sabbaticals. In doing so we want to involve partners to collective agreements and business establishments. Transforming unemployment insurance into employment insurance shall help in funding this pillar.

We are also promoting general, cultural and political further education. It shall also benefit the older generation. By means of further education elderly people can stay active in occupational life and society. Education enables the older generation to keep pace with time.

Strengthening children and families

Children stand for joyful expectation of the future. They are the foundation of each society. We want a society offering best chances for families with children and a climate of openness towards the needs of children. Successful children and family policy belongs to the key issues of our country's preparedness for the future.

We are favouring families where mothers and fathers are equally responsible for maintenance and care. This is what the vast majority of young people want. It corresponds to the need of children for mother and father and safeguards economic independence of families.

In families people experience love, security, hold, orientation and mutual support, they sense shelter and learn to be responsible for each other. We orientate our family model to social reality. We do not want to dictate a life model for people to choose. Most people want married life which we protect. At the same time we are supporting other joint paths through life, non-marital life communities, life partnerships of the same gender and single parents. Single mothers and fathers need specific support. Family is wherever there are children and where partners for a life or generations stand up for each other. We want to improve conditions for families with children and create openness and understanding for children creating a climate in which children, even not one's own, are not considered burdens but joy and encouragement.

We must make it easier for young couples to fulfil their wishes for children without lagging behind in occupational life. This holds especially for parents who want more than one child. Couples who want three or more children should not have to do without them for financial reasons. When founding their families and later in each phase of life young families need targeted support. We want to grant this by means of good and reliable care, family compatible working times and financial aid.

Even the business world has responsibility for families. Precarious gainful employment impairs decisions in favour of children. Families suffer where the ever available workforce becomes the ideal. After all working times orientated towards the needs of parents also benefit economy. We want a world of work suitable for families enabling parents to combine occupational life with family to have more time for children. This is also in the interest of enterprises.

When parents separate this must not become a risk for children to impoverish. Single parents, mostly mothers, are not able to work without care facilities. Therefore such facilities are crucial.

The right of parents finds its limits where the right of children is impaired. Children have their own rights like the right to being raised free of violence. We want to anchor these rights in our Constitution. Where they are violated state and society must intervene.

4. Our way

Future is open. We do not promise anybody to turn a world rampant with conflicts and contradictions into a paradise on earth. We acknowledge realities without accepting conditions as they are. We want to go the way into a future worth living. We want to qualify our country for the future.

We want a fairer and more peaceful world.

We want a social and democratic Europe.

We want a society of citizens in solidarity, a culture of respect and recognition as well as a functioning democratic state.

We want to realize equality of the genders.

By means of qualitative growth we want to enable wealth and quality in life for all and protect our natural foundation for life.

We want good work and fair pay for all.

We want the preventive welfare state granting security, participation and equal opportunities in life.

We want better education in a society suitable for families and children.

History told us that conditions are changed by people, not by systems. A better future does not come by itself, we must create and shape it. A political party can only be as strong as the people sharing its values and supporting its aims.

Many people are committed in trade unions, societies, associations, churches, social movements and networks. Many people want a better and fairer society. The majority in Germany wants to live in solidarity.

We want to win over this majority in solidarity for our policy. We are canvassing support encouraging for active participation.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany is fighting for sustainable progress and social justice in the 21st century.