

Policy change for Germany

Election program of CDU and CSU



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-ABSTRACT-

Policy change for Germany

We all know how our country is doing – and that it cannot go on like this. Every federal government is rightly expected to do better for the country and its people at the end of their term of office. The traffic light has disappointed these expectations. Germany has three lost years behind us – and historically great challenges ahead of us. A lot is at stake in the coming years. It is about our freedom, it is about peace, prosperity, security and the cohesion of our society.

At the same time, we know about the power that lies in our country and in each and every one of us. We have everything we need to bring Germany forward again. The aim is to unleash this potential again.

To do this, our country needs a federal government that tackles the really important things again: securing peace in freedom, prosperity for all, security and cohesion. Our country needs stability and a new beginning. Our country needs a change of policy!

We are convinced that with a new policy, we can ensure that German land moves forward again. And our promise is: We will make sure of it.

We have a plan for this:

For a new promise of prosperity

Germany needs a policy for the hard-working population again – an agenda for the hard-working. It is now a matter of broad-based relief.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are relieving the burden on people with low and middle incomes in particular. To this end, we are adjusting the income tax rate. Our goal for social security contributions: We want to move back to 40 percent.
- We make overtime bonuses tax-free for full-time work. Those who voluntarily want to work more should have more net of their gross income.
- We are increasing the commuter allowance. In this way, we strengthen our service providers in rural areas.
- We are modernising labour law: In future, all companies will have a maximum weekly working time instead of a daily one.
- We are setting up a digital "work-and-stay agency" for foreign skilled workers. It offers services from a single source: recruitment, job placement, examination of entry requirements, issuance of visas, residence permits.

Awakening for the economy – unleashing forces with new freedom

Economy is not everything, but without economy everything is nothing. That is why we focus on growth, investments, freedom for our companies and good jobs.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are reducing the corporate tax burden to a maximum of 25 percent, abolishing the residual solidarity surcharge and improving depreciation and loss offsetting.
- We eliminate superfluous paperwork with clearance laws and bureaucracy checks. We are reducing statistical obligations and duplicate structures.
- We stop burdens: We abolish the national supply chain law.
- We are putting an end to adding: To this end, we are taking back the German over-fulfilment of European law and preventing it in the future.

Making energy affordable, protecting the climate in a market economy

We are ending the ideology-driven politics of the traffic light. What is needed now is a change in policy: with the people and not against them – that's how energy and climate policy works.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are reducing electricity tax and grid charges. Electricity must become cheaper for everyone quickly and noticeably.
- We are expanding grids, storage facilities and all renewables and focusing on affordability and security of supply. Only more supply lowers prices.
- We are sticking to the nuclear energy option. In doing so, we rely on research into fourth- and fifth-generation nuclear energy, small modular reactors and fusion power plants. We are examining the resumption of operation of the nuclear power plants that were recently shut down.
- We abolish the heating law of the traffic light. There must be an end to the bureaucratic re-government in the boiler room. We promote low-emission heating solutions that are open to technology.
- We rely on emissions trading. It is the right instrument for efficiently limiting the amount of emissions and thus protecting the climate in the best possible way.

Making Germany fit for innovation, digitization and startups

Research, Innovation, Technologies and Transfer (FITT) are the basis for a competitive economy with well-paid jobs. Spin-offs and the transfer to marketable solutions must be more successful. Back to the top with "Made in Germany"!

We act. What matters most now:

- We are driving the re-industrialization of our country forward with digitization as well as sovereign AI and cloud applications. Future technologies need freedom, and the state needs clear responsibilities. To this end, we are setting up a Federal Digital Ministry.

- We ensure that industry and the state spend 3.5 per cent of gross domestic product on research and development by 2030.
- We present a high-tech agenda. Germany must become a centre of excellence and innovation location for future technologies – from aerospace to quantum computing. We will pursue a new, ambitious space strategy.
- We make you want to be entrepreneurial. With a "start-up protection zone", we are largely freeing ourselves from bureaucratic regulations in the start-up phase.
- We are changing course: Data protection policy must become a real data opportunity policy. We must take advantage of the opportunities offered by open data for innovation and growth.

For a strong and just welfare state

This is what employees expect from politicians. And rightly so, because they create our prosperity with their will to perform.

We act. What matters most now:

- We abolish the so-called "citizen's allowance" and replace it with a new basic security. Promoting and demanding must always apply.
- We stand by the statutory minimum wage and a strong, independent minimum wage commission. Wage determination must be a matter for the social partners – in the sense of fairness and economic reason.
- We promote retirement planning with property and assets through higher exemptions for real estate transfer and inheritance tax as well as savings. We reject a wealth tax.
- We are sticking to the existing legal regulation on the retirement age. There will be no pension cuts with us.
- We are introducing an active pension. Those who voluntarily continue to work beyond the statutory retirement age receive their salary up to 2,000 euros per month tax-free.
- We are introducing an early start pension. To this end, the state subsidises individual and funded private pension provision for all 6 to 18-year-olds with 10 euros per month. In this way, we build up a starting asset for early private retirement provision.
- We are also relieving the burden on pensioners in a very practical way and want to make their tax returns superfluous in the event of a general event.

Supporting our agriculture

Farmers deserve recognition, respect and trust. We are providing relief through better framework conditions and planning security.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are reintroducing the agricultural diesel rebate in full. In this way, we relieve the burden on agricultural businesses.
- In Brussels, we are campaigning for the agricultural budget to remain well funded. At the same time, the Common Agricultural Policy must be drastically simplified.

- We declare war on bureaucracy: material flow balance in fertiliser law, land law, taxonomy. A farmer must be able to be a farmer again.
- Farmers and foresters can rely on us: we support innovative technologies and sustainable management. The forced closure of areas will not happen with us.
- We regulate the wolf population. Wolves must be able to be hunted – depending on the region – so that fewer grazing animals are killed.

Enforce law and order

We rely on a zero-tolerance strategy, strengthen the backs of the police and law enforcement agencies and give them the necessary powers that are needed.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are tightening criminal law and accelerating proceedings. The punishment must follow the deed on the heels.
- We are increasingly relying on the electronic ankle bracelet. Perpetrators of violence against women must be stopped.
- We are deploying more video cameras and automated facial recognition systems at hot spots and hazardous locations. Criminals must not simply get away with it.
- We oblige Internet service providers to store IP addresses. We take consistent action against any form of violence against children – including on the Internet.
- We abolish the cannabis law of the traffic light. This law protects dealers and exposes our children and young people to drug use and addiction.

Stopping illegal migration

Our country needs a fundamental change in migration policy. The influx is too much and no longer manageable. A strict limitation of migration is urgently needed.

We act. What matters most now:

- We control the German state borders and enforce consistent rejections at the border. We have to decide for ourselves again who comes to us and who is allowed to stay.
- We are accelerating asylum procedures and repatriations. To this end, we are declaring other countries of safe origin and are also deporting them back to Syria and Afghanistan.
- We are suspending family reunification with beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and ending all voluntary admission programmes.
- We base social benefits for those obliged to leave the country on the principle of "bed, bread and soap" established by the courts. We don't make any compromises when it comes to the payment card.
- We want to change European asylum law and are aware of our humanitarian responsibility. Anyone who applies for asylum in Europe should be transferred to a safe third country, where they will go through their procedure and find protection there if necessary. Protection and

security – fighting the enemies of our state

We are countering the increasing extremist threats with a 360-degree view. We fight every form of extremism, violence and terror with full force.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are making supporting terrorist organizations more consistently a punishable offence and taking action: expulsion, revocation of residence permits, loss of German citizenship.
- We close mosques where hatred and anti-Semitism are preached. There is no legal vacuum for Islamism.
- We show right-wing extremists the red card and fight them with full force on the basis of our package of measures launched in 2020.
- We counter left-wing extremism just as consistently. We will not allow open calls for violence against our state and attacks on the property of third parties or critical infrastructure.
- We consistently punish the display of anti-constitutional symbols as well as anti-constitutional and anti-Semitic statements. The rule of law must take action.
- We are arming ourselves with a real customs police force and skimming off crime profits. In the future, criminals will have to prove where their assets come from – from villas to yachts. Crimes must not be worthwhile.

Taking responsibility in Europe and the world

We need to become more capable of acting geopolitically and represent our legitimate national interests strategically wisely, instead of arrogantly insulting our international partners.

We act. What matters most now:

- We stand for a Europe that is developing in the right direction: less bureaucracy, more competitiveness.
- We want to strengthen the transatlantic partnership as the foundation of the Western world – especially in turbulent times.
- We are revitalising our relations with France and Poland: we are providing impetus in the fight against illegal migration, for the economy and innovation, security and defence, and we are expanding the infrastructure towards our neighbouring countries.
- We create a National Security Council with its seat in the Federal Chancellery. In this way, we link foreign, security, defence, trade, European and development policy.
- We are supporting Ukraine with diplomatic, financial and humanitarian means, as well as arms deliveries. It also defends our freedom. We stand with Israel in its legitimate fight against terror.

For freedom, peace and security

Peace in security and freedom is the guiding principle for our security policy actions. To this end, we are building a strong Bundeswehr.

We act. What matters most now:

- We introduce an increasing conscription. This is necessary for peace and security in our country.
- We stand by the two percent target – at least. Because NATO is our security guarantee.
- We strengthen our security and defence industry. In the procurement of materials and equipment, we want more cooperation and production in Europe.
- We are taking the lead in building a European missile defence shield. The threat from the air is greater than ever.

Living a dominant culture and cohesion

There are rules and norms that have grown in our country and must be recognized and respected by all those who want to live here. We stand by our guiding culture.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are introducing mandatory integration agreements. For a clear commitment to our values! Our goal is to closely accompany and demand integration.
- We create better starting opportunities through a wide range of German and integration courses. It must be clear to everyone that integration cannot succeed without the German language.
- We are reversing the express naturalization of the traffic light, as well as the general possibility of dual citizenship. The German passport is at the end of integration and not at the beginning.
- We relieve the burden on sports clubs and people who are committed to helping others. We are noticeably increasing the volunteer and trainer allowances.
- We are focusing on a mandatory social year in the future. This opens up opportunities for young people and creates a new sense of togetherness.
- We are preventing remote-controlled Islam. Stop the influence of foreign governments on German Muslims via mosque associations and Islamic associations!

Supporting families, taking responsibility

Families are real top performers and create stability. Our claim: We give families enough leeway to be able to shape their lives independently.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are improving parental leave and parental allowance. They give families more time and support the desire for division of tasks.
- In the future, we are developing the child allowance in the direction of the basic allowance for parents. We are also raising child benefit accordingly. In addition, we are sticking to spousal splitting and want to take greater account of children in the future.

- We want a good supply of childcare places. In addition, we are increasing the tax deductibility of childcare costs.
- We abolish the self-determination law of the traffic light again. The protection of minors and the parents' right to bring up children must not be undermined.

For good education

Children are our future and need the best starting opportunities from the very beginning – all of them. The linchpin is a functioning, reliable education system.

We act. What matters most now:

- We rely on mandatory language tests at pre-school age. Children with language problems have to attend a daycare centre or preschool.
- We are once again focusing on effort and performance, starting with core subjects such as maths and German and ending with the National Youth Games.
- We want a nationwide comparable Abitur at a high level. There must be no compromises in terms of requirements.
- We support the development of vocational schools. It depends on every skilled worker. For flexibility in the profession, we promote partial and further qualifications.
- We are improving BAföG and additional income opportunities. In addition, we ensure that the application process is less bureaucratic and faster.

For good health and care

We stand for high-quality health care that also works reliably in rural areas. We are concerned with services of general interest, personal responsibility and prevention.

We act. What matters most now:

- We strengthen the structures in health and care care in urban and rural areas.
- We ensure that the long waiting times for a doctor's appointment are reduced. To this end, we are improving patient management.
- We are strengthening brick-and-mortar pharmacies and giving them a future. For many people, they are the first point of contact for health problems.
- We improve home care and the situation of relatives. Care services must be able to be used more flexibly.
- We are tackling the staffing crisis by making the nursing profession more attractive. There must be more predictability and opportunities for advancement.

For construction, housing and sustainable mobility

Whether in the city or in the countryside – people should live well where they are at home. This requires equal living conditions and a policy that is committed to it.

We act. What matters most now:

- We make construction affordable. To this end, we are fundamentally streamlining building regulations and regional planning law and reducing the regulations noticeably and responsibly. Only cheaper and more construction ensures lower rents.
- We also allow permanent construction in places where previously only simplified construction according to special regulations was permitted. In addition, we focus on simple and innovative construction.
- We stand for effective and appropriate tenant protection – this also includes the rules on rent levels. Social housing construction must be solidly promoted and housing benefit must be adjusted regularly.
- We make costs for energy-efficient renovations deductible from inheritance and gift tax. In this way, we promote the efficient energy-efficient renovation of the real estate portfolio.
- We make the railway afloat by tackling the structures. For more competition, the infrastructure and transport sectors must be separated more closely than before.
- We stand by the car and the automotive industry. The ban on internal combustion engines must be reversed. For e-mobility, the charging infrastructure must be appropriately expanded.
- We are making digital motor vehicle registration the standard by making it uniform and uncomplicated throughout Germany. This also applies to the involvement of insurers. We are also introducing the digital vehicle file.

A functioning state – our promise for the future

The traffic light has argued and destroyed trust. We want to act and regain trust – faster, more efficiently, digitally and with leaner structures.

We act. What matters most now:

- We are halving the number of commissioners and getting by with at least ten percent fewer staff in the ministerial administration and the Bundestag administration.
- We are sticking to the debt brake of the Basic Law. Today's debts are tomorrow's tax increases.
- We protect German savers. We clearly reject all forms of liability for the debts of other EU states.
- We want to speed up planning and approval procedures – especially for construction, transport and digital infrastructures.
- We will prove with an immediate program from the very first hour that the right policy can make a difference.

Dear voters,

Dear citizens,

They deserve a government that governs our country better.

We know how to do that. And we will govern better.

We are happy about every hand that lends a hand,

so that Germany can move forward again.

We ask for your support for this – with your two votes for the Union!

I. For a Germany of which we can be proud again

Our Federal Republic of Germany is a great success story: reconstruction, economic miracle and world championship title, integration with the West, peaceful revolution, reunification and reconstruction of the East Germans, prosperity, social market economy with good work and strong social insurance, "Made in Germany" as a globally known seal of quality, a strong European Union, our friendship with France and Poland, reconciliation with Israel and transatlantic partnership, Freedom and security. We can be proud of that!

Unfortunately, the past few years have painted a different, worse picture of our country: the economy is shrinking, our industry is under international pressure, and the infrastructure is partly dilapidated. Unemployment is rising, the social security systems are in trouble. Populists and extremists are deepening the division.

At the same time, we are experiencing challenges of historic proportions: Germany and Europe have to defend themselves against threats to their security and continue to be confronted with massive illegal migration. In addition, there are far-reaching upheavals in the course of digitization and, last but not least, the task of climate change for humanity.

But we also know that Germany has everything it needs to move forward again. We know about the talents and skills that each individual brings to the table. We know that with personal responsibility, performance and solidarity, something great can happen again. We believe in the power and inventiveness of people. We believe in a defensive German state that assumes responsibility in Europe and the world and represents its interests with self-confidence. We believe in the great power in our country.

We will release this power. To do this, our country needs a government that works reliably and tackles the things that really matter: prosperity for all, security and cohesion. Our country needs stability and a new beginning. Our country needs a change of policy. To this end, we as the CDU and CSU are running together in the Bundestag elections. And for this we are campaigning for trust.

We believe that Germany will move forward again with a new policy. We are making sure that Germany is moving forward again with a new policy. Now it's time to do instead of talk! Governing instead of arguing! We have a plan for Germany. Time is pressing. We are providing a strong impetus for new beginnings and confidence.

We want a country that creates prosperity for all again.

We want a country that is free and safe again.

We want a country that sticks together again.

We want to bring Germany forward again.

A Germany of which we can be proud again.

II. Our plan for a country that restores prosperity for all

Germany is a strong economy. Germany has everything it needs: We are the country of medium-sized companies and family businesses, hidden champions and crafts, the self-employed and the liberal professions, innovative founders and globally successful industrial and service companies. And everywhere and in the middle of it: hard-working workers who keep our country running, creative inventors, excellent engineers and farmers who provide us with high-quality food. We can rely on this, even in difficult times – and we have to. The economic situation in our country has become tense, the industrial base has become fragile and with it the stability of our social network. Many companies and businesses complain about high energy prices, bureaucratic madness and new regulations non-stop, a lack of skilled workers and a crushing tax burden. And those who don't sue have already given up – either Germany as a location in order to produce elsewhere, or altogether. More and more citizens are asking themselves: Is it still worth going to work? They want a society in which performance pays off and at the same time the hand is reached out to those who are dependent on help.

We stand by the social market economy, we stand by competition, growth and prosperity. For us, it is clear that "prosperity for all" is only possible with freedom and planning security for the economy, with a strong and fair welfare state, with personal responsibility and diligence, which is also rewarded. To do this, our country needs a change of policy now.

We want a country that creates prosperity for all again.

We want to bring Germany forward again.

A Germany of which we can be proud again.

Yes to an agenda for the hard-working

Our plan:

Performance must pay off again.

Modernize labor law.

Attracting workers and skilled workers.

We act.

Performance must pay off again

Work is meaningful and creates prosperity when one's own effort is rewarded. But the fact is that the burden of taxes and other levies in our country is too high. We therefore need an agenda for

the hard-working, a broad relief for the population: Those who do more must be able to afford more. Lower taxes and contributions also ensure higher wages, more jobs, stronger growth and more secure social systems.

- Relieve income. To this end, we are gradually flattening the income tax rate noticeably and increasing the basic tax-free amount. We are significantly increasing the income threshold for the top tax rate.
- Relieve the burden on low-income earners. Those who work must have more than those who do not work. Our goal for social security contributions: We want to move back to 40 percent. With an annual "Social State Sustainability Report", we keep a close eye on the development of the social security funds and take the necessary measures.
- Prevent the burden of inflation. Rising prices must not lead to a higher income tax burden. That is why we regularly adjust the income tax rate to inflation and thus compensate for the cold progression. In doing so, we also take into account all inflation-sensitive deduction amounts.
- Relieve commuters. We are increasing the commuter allowance. In this way, we strengthen our service providers in rural areas.
- Extra work must pay off. We make overtime bonuses tax-free for full-time employees. Those who voluntarily want to work more should have more net of the gross.
- Enable rapid relief in crises. In Europe, we are committed to ensuring that energy and sales tax for everyday goods can be reduced quickly and without lengthy approval in a tense situation.

Modernising labour law

Our labour law is getting on in years, and modernisation is more than overdue. We need to take into account the changes in a modern, digital world of work and, in particular, address developments towards more flexible working hours. We are tackling this resolutely.

- Work more flexibly. We are reforming the Working Hours Act and setting a maximum weekly working time for all companies instead of the daily working time in accordance with the European Working Time Directive.
- Maintain high standards of occupational health and safety. This is especially true for professions that are prone to danger. Here we take into account the special protection requirements because the risk of accidents increases after eight hours.
- Legally compliant mobile work and in the home office. We are making the requirements for mobile workplaces more practical. At the same time, we make it clear that mobile working at freely chosen locations does not fall within the scope of the Workplace Ordinance. We are also creating legal certainty for the home office and thus promoting mobile working forms: If voluntarily chosen, we define it as a sub-case of mobile working, regardless of the amount of time.

- Mobile working in Europe. Cross-border mobile working within the EU must become legally secure and as flexible as possible for both employees and employers.
- Facilitate personnel partnerships and make them more legally secure. For example, two companies can provide each other with free personnel capacities within the framework of a cooperation with the consent of the works councils.

Attracting workers and skilled workers

The shortage of labour and skilled workers is slowing down our economic development. For demographic reasons, it is becoming even worse and is becoming a real location risk. Companies could actually produce more, but there is a lack of staff for this. We are combating the problem with a skilled worker offensive and ensuring more productivity. We want to be an attractive location for foreign skilled workers and become a liveable home.

- Remove hurdles. Part-time women in particular are a group with great potential for the labour market. There is a need for better framework conditions for full-time work or near-full-time work.
- Strengthen household-related services. We are improving the tax deductibility of household-related services.
- Catch up on vocational qualifications. We support people in helper jobs on their way to becoming qualified specialists and develop incentives to acquire vocational qualifications.
- Abolish the ban on prior employment after reaching the standard retirement age. In this way, we make employment contracts legally secure. In this way, we also ensure more flexibility.
- Attracting foreign skilled workers. A good qualification is of central importance here. In this way, permanent employment can be achieved. We focus on the simplified and accelerated recognition of foreign professional qualifications.
- Faster and digital processes for immigrant workers. To this end, we are setting up a digital Federal Agency for Immigration ("Work-and-Stay Agency"). Skilled workers thus receive service from a single source: from recruitment and job placement to checking entry requirements and issuing visas to residence permits. We separate the asylum procedures from the procedures for immigration into the labour market.

Yes to freedom for the economy

Our plan:

Reduce the tax burden.

Noticeably reduce bureaucracy.

Simplify taxes.

Strengthening the resilience of the economy.

Free trade and exports.

We act.

Reduce the tax burden

Germany is a high-tax country for companies. A successful and sought-after business location must also be competitive in terms of the tax burden. In this way, we enable higher wages, more jobs and more growth. And in this way, we are creating the basis for our cities and municipalities to have reliable and adequate financial resources and to be able to master the various challenges on the ground on their own. It is time for a major tax reform.

- Competitive corporate taxation. Our goal is an attractive corporate tax rate of no more than 25 percent on retained profits, which we intend to implement gradually. To this end, we are reducing the tariff burden in particular and significantly improving the option model and the retaining privilege. In the existing tax systems for corporations and partnerships, we are creating more choice, uniformity and permeability.
- Away with the rest of the solos. We are abolishing the remaining solidarity surcharge. It has long since fulfilled its task, can no longer be justified almost 35 years after reunification and is a burden on companies, skilled workers and savers.
- Improve loss offsetting. To this end, we are expanding the loss carry-back and abolishing the restriction on loss carry-forward by the minimum taxation.
- Giving new impetus with depreciation. To this end, we are rewriting the depreciation tables and updating the depreciation periods. Our goal is to produce digitized tables with the normal service life. We want turbo depreciation for a rapid growth impulse.
- Think about tomorrow today. The next generation should also be able to continue running a company. That is why we do not place a burden on the substance of family businesses in the succession and simplify company succession.
- Gastro tax down. We are reducing VAT on food in the catering industry to seven percent.

Noticeably reduce bureaucracy

Excessive documentation and reporting obligations, a lack of flexibility, long procedures and enforcement problems in public authorities: this costs unnecessary money, time, nerves and personnel, especially in medium-sized companies. Worse still, companies and all those who want to tackle things lose the courage to try something new. Reducing bureaucracy really means "giving back freedom". We want a culture of doing and not avoiding mistakes. We used to be proud of how quickly things worked in Germany. That is our goal again.

- Cure our country of bureaucratic madness. We pass annual laws to reduce bureaucracy as real clearance laws and strengthen the bureaucracy brake ("one in, two out"). Where reasonably possible, we give laws and regulations an expiration date. We want to know exactly where the shoe pinches: That's why we are doing more bureaucracy checks in close cooperation with the companies concerned.
- Strengthen the reduction of bureaucracy. We are bringing the National Regulatory Control Council (NKR) and the responsibility for bureaucracy reduction and better regulation back to the Federal Chancellery. For real added value, we are making it more effective and streamlining the structures, also so that the NKR can take a closer look at sub-statutory regulations.
- Stop loads immediately. We are abolishing the German Supply Chain Act. In Europe, we want to put a stop to burdens, such as regulation for sustainable investments (taxonomy) or sustainability reporting (Corporate Sustainability Reporting).
- Reverse the trend in EU bureaucracy. Because we trust people in principle, we want to return to trust-based legislation. The best is the bureaucracy, which does not arise in the first place. That is why we will introduce "EU forechecking" in order to participate in European legislation in Brussels much earlier, more strategically and more successfully.
- Keep EU bureaucracy to a minimum. With a law against saddling – the "Anti-Gold-Plating Act" – we are withdrawing regulations that go beyond European law and preventing any over-fulfilment in the future. We reject parallel regulations at European and national level.
- Trust instead of dissipation. In the trades, retail, gastronomy or hotel industry, we reverse the burden of proof in the case of documentation obligations and replace the regular evidence with a right to report violations.
- Reduce statistical burdens. We are reducing statistical obligations, data collection and reporting by providing companies with a right of referral. To this end, communication between authorities on the data already available must be improved. But this is not enough: duplicate structures at the statistical offices must also be consistently reduced.
- Relax written form in labour law. We put to the test all still existing labour law requirements of writing down on paper with a handwritten signature and handing over in person or by post. Only where it is mandatory should the written form be retained, for example in the case of terminations and industry-specific need for protection.
- Strengthen the free movement of workers. We are campaigning for the procedure for the cross-border posting of workers to other EU countries in particular to be simplified and digitised (A1 certificate, registration and registration procedure).
- Create legal certainty, prevent bogus self-employment. We are adapting the status determination procedure in the interests of the self-employed and companies.

- An end to more and more company representatives. The obligation to appoint company representatives – for example, for waste, fire protection or security – places a heavy burden on small and medium-sized enterprises. We are exempting them from this and standardising the thresholds above which commissioners must be appointed.

Simplify taxes

Tax bureaucracy is also increasing and is a major burden – for citizens as well as for companies. We are clearing out the regulations and creating a simpler tax law.

- Make everyday life easier for companies. We are uniformly shortening the retention period for accounting documents in commercial and tax law from eight to five years. This means that tax audits will be carried out more quickly and will be more automated and significantly accelerated. This also increases legal certainty and improves competitive conditions.
- Simplify tax return obligations for pensioners and pensioners. We are introducing a withholding tax deduction so that as a rule there is no longer any need to file a tax return. We avoid double taxation of pensions.
- Simplify tax assessment. We are pushing ahead with self-assessment and the digital exchange of data with the tax authorities. Our goal is fully automated assessment.
- Lump sums instead of receipts. With more lump sums and typifications, we are simplifying income tax law in particular.
- Use the leeway of EU law. We are introducing the offsetting model for import VAT in order to keep bureaucracy and liquidity burdens as low as possible.
- Read and understand tax laws. They must be made more understandable for citizens, companies and administration. To this end, we are simplifying the language of the law and deleting outdated regulations that are no longer applied.
- Consistent digitalization, better control. We digitize and automate taxation processes and provide AI technology. This also helps tax authorities to control tax obligations and effectively combat tax fraud.

Strengthening the resilience of the economy

Geoeconomic challenges and crises are increasing; they are a serious problem for our economy. We must strengthen the resilience of our economy and give it legal and planning certainty. This can only be done together with our partners in Europe, it can only be done with a strong internal market. Just like security policy, economic policy is also called upon to find answers to takeovers by system competitors or cyber attacks that paralyze entire companies and supply chains.

- Make the "Basic Law of the Social Market Economy" legally secure. We are once again tying the Bundeskartellamt's powers under competition law to intervene in the market to a violation of the law. We firmly reject a general suspicion of the economy.
- Fair competition in Europe. We are committed to modern antitrust and competition law that uses the global market as a benchmark.
- Improve abuse control of strong customers. We strengthen the protection of producers and suppliers against unfair trading practices.
- Protective umbrella for our economy. We are introducing effective instruments to overcome the crisis and against subsidies that distort global competition.
- Consistently enforce intellectual property rights. We focus on combating product and brand piracy as well as product safety. In this way, we strengthen the innovative and creative power of the German economy.
- More realism instead of naivety. We protect security-relevant technologies, critical infrastructures and companies from takeovers by systemic rivals.
- Business must be aware of cyber dangers. We ensure that SMEs in particular are better informed and sensitised. Because of their innovative and economic power, medium-sized companies are sought-after targets for international competitors, foreign intelligence services and criminals. We are creating tax incentives and favourable financing for the cyber measures of small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Cybersecurity "Made in Germany". Our goal is for Germany to become the world market leader for secure IT solutions and an attractive location for innovative cybersecurity companies.

Supporting free trade and exports

The export world champions are now others, no longer us. Nevertheless, Germany remains an export economy. One in four jobs depends on exports – and a large part of our prosperity. However, world trade is weakening, protectionism and unfair trade practices are increasing, supply bottlenecks and rising commodity prices are becoming a burden for companies. Our compass remains: We support free trade so that we can catch up and secure jobs. In doing so, we are better buffering international and global risks. Germany must become a resilient export economy.

- For our interests. We ensure that our international cooperation is geared specifically to Germany's strategic economic interests. To this end, we are doing a better job of dovetailing foreign trade promotion and development cooperation. In the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, we are also committed to ensuring that the German economy benefits significantly more from state-funded development projects.
- Together you are stronger. We are concluding new energy and raw materials partnerships and advocating pragmatic trade agreements at the European level.

- Trade fairly instead of isolating yourself. In the case of market-distorting subsidies and export subsidies, we rely on the EU anti-subsidy procedure and an effective, internationally recognised dispute settlement mechanism at the World Trade Organisation. In principle, tariffs are not the way to go.
- Global trade only works on the basis of equal rights and obligations. That is why we follow the principle of reciprocity.
- Strengthen export promotion. Export-oriented companies need good access to capital and state guarantees to hedge risks. We are reversing the new climate policy sector guidelines for guarantees. We reject a distinction between good and less good, desired and less desirable economic activity of German companies abroad.
- Do not unnecessarily hinder foreign trade. Export controls must become more efficient. To this end, we are significantly accelerating export licenses.
- Conclude agreements. Mercosur has been negotiated and must now enter into force quickly. In doing so, we have a particular focus on ensuring fair competitive conditions to protect our agriculture. In the EU, we support new agreements with India and the ASEAN states and deepen partnerships, especially with the USA, for a comprehensive transatlantic economic, trade and future area.
- "De-risking", but the right way. We want to maintain close economic relations with China, provided that they are based on the principle of reciprocity. At the same time, we will reduce critical economic dependencies, for example by diversifying sales markets, sources of raw materials and supply chains, as well as protecting critical infrastructure and security-relevant technology.
- Reducing dependencies means becoming more confident. The production of semiconductors and battery cells in Europe must be strongly boosted. To this end, we are quickly breathing life into the European Chips Act and making greater use of the European Semiconductor Alliance (ESRA).
- Innovations "Made in Germany". In Africa in particular, but also throughout the global South and the Asia-Pacific region, we want to intensify economic relations, not least so as not to leave the field to China and Russia. It is therefore in our interest to strengthen the African Union and other regional associations in the long term. With a view to climate protection through future technologies, there are great opportunities for technologies from Germany. That is why we support economic growth on the African continent and the African Free Trade Area.
- Raw materials from here. We also secure the supply through responsible, domestic mining. In addition, we see the recyclable materials resulting from recycling as raw materials 2.0. They meet the highest standards and are sustainable at the same time. We promote the private-sector, non-speculative creation of inventories through a raw material storage reserve.

Yes to affordable, safe and clean energy

Our plan:

Provide affordable energy.

Be at the forefront of energy innovations.

We act.

Providing affordable energy

The energy crisis has changed our country. Higher prices with rising energy demand are unsettling millions of people and companies alike. Politicians must not close their eyes to reality. For us, it is clear that energy must be affordable, safer and clean. All cost drivers must be put to the test, and at the same time energy efficiency is important. This is what we stand for, in close cooperation with the EU and our international partners.

- Ideology-free and technology-open to affordable energy. We are connecting all capacities that are climate-friendly and system-friendly to the grid, starting with a targeted further expansion of renewable energies. We use renewables consistently, all of them: wind energy on land and at sea, solar energy, geothermal energy, hydropower, bioenergy and the renewable raw material wood. The potential of combined heat and power generation must be used consistently.
- Secure supply. We are increasing security of supply through a pragmatic power plant strategy that establishes a capacity market that is open to all technologies and thus ensures competitive safeguarding of the secured capacity.
- New electricity market. We are implementing an electricity market design that recognises the new realities and secures the necessary investments. To achieve greater price stability, we are continuing to develop the futures markets. Utilities must be able to secure their supply contracts better and more cost-effectively.
- Thinking about infrastructure holistically. We pay particular attention to integrated and cross-border grid expansion as well as to efficient linking of the expansion of renewable energies, grids and storage systems. To this end, we want to attract more private capital. For a fast and cost-effective expansion of power grids, we are increasingly using overhead lines. When it comes to electricity, heat, gas, hydrogen and CO₂ infrastructure, we rely on standardisation and joint expansion.
- Structural change, but reliable. We stand by the coal compromise and the agreed coal phase-out. There must be no further final shutdown of coal-fired power plants along the way as long as no new gas-fired power plants and combined heat and power plants are built as replacements. We are keeping the promises made in the Structural Strengthening Act and the agreements between the federal government and the affected states.

- Nuclear energy option. This has an important role to play, especially with regard to climate targets and security of supply. In doing so, we rely on research into fourth- and fifth-generation nuclear energy, small modular reactors and fusion power plants. At the same time, we are striving to take stock of the situation as soon as possible to determine whether, in view of the respective stage of dismantling, it is still possible to resume operation of the most recently shut down nuclear power plants at a reasonable technical and financial cost.
- Genuine European Energy Union. A genuine European internal energy market creates resilience and is good for consumers with more choice. We are mobilising European potential for the necessary energy imports and exports and intensifying international partnerships.
- Levies put to the test. We are using leeway to relieve taxes and other levies on energy. We are reducing the electricity tax for everyone and reducing grid fees.
- Smart energy. Consumers should be able to react more flexibly to the price of electricity. To achieve this, the use of electricity must become more intelligent through smart meters and digitalisation. In this way, we achieve better load distribution. This reduces consumption and costs.
- Regulating grid charges. We are in favour of maintaining an electricity bidding zone and resolute grid expansion. Instead of different electricity price zones, electricity must become cheaper for everyone in Germany. A reform of grid charges will reduce the burden and increase acceptance. We reject an additional grid fee burden for large industrial consumers who cannot produce flexibly.
- Withdraw the heating law of the traffic light. People need freedom of choice. They know best which type of heating suits their home and their wallet. Our aim is to promote and use low-emission heating solutions that are open to technology. For us, this also includes heating with the renewable raw material wood. We are abolishing the heating law of the traffic light.
- Reliable decarbonization in the building sector. In doing so, we rely on CO2 pricing with social compensation, reliable subsidies and technology-neutral solutions. In this way, we take into account different conditions in the portfolio.
- More market, less state. We are focusing on pioneering markets that can be used to achieve an efficient market ramp-up through quotas for green gas in the gas grid, green heating oil or, for example, climate-neutral steel. For example, the state does not decide who is allowed to participate in the market through subsidies. In these new markets, the best providers prevail.

Be at the forefront of energy innovation

Our energy research is world-class. We focus on future technologies "Made in Germany". We are launching an offensive for energy innovation that creates growth and prosperity and serves as a model for other countries.

- Energetically advanced. For climate-friendly energy, we ensure technology-open energy research. We are also expanding research collaborations beyond the Energy Union.
- Open to technology and fit for the future. For us, this means conducting broad research for the best form of energy generation: fuel cells, power plants with climate-neutral gases, geothermal energy, fourth- and fifth-generation nuclear energy, small modular reactors and fusion power plants. The same applies to research on transport and storage.
- Making hydrogen a success. To this end, we are creating planning security and the necessary infrastructure. One thing is clear: all economic regions must be reached by the hydrogen core network, and there must be no discrimination against individual regions. We also need a large dose of pragmatism in domestic production and international hydrogen partnerships. The hydrogen ramp-up will only be successful in the European context.

Yes to market-based climate and environmental protection

Our plan:

Comply with climate targets.

Implementing emissions trading correctly.

Use resources sustainably.

Doing environmental protection together.

We act.

Meeting climate targets

In three years, the traffic light has shown with its ideological and planned economy approach how it does not work. Germany is experiencing a profound de-industrialization. We must finally understand that climate protection needs a strong economy. Climate protection can only be achieved globally and together with people. We see it as our responsibility to preserve creation. We understand sustainability comprehensively.

- Meet Paris climate targets. We have our sights firmly set on climate neutrality by 2045. Global warming is a global problem that the international community can only solve together. We absolutely link this goal to maintaining the competitiveness of our economy and the need for social sustainability. This is the only way we can ensure acceptance among people and the opportunities for economic growth.
- Take responsibility for the world. We support other countries in climate protection. In doing so, we focus on technology and knowledge transfer with innovations "Made in Germany".

- Thinking holistically about climate protection. Climate protection and climate adaptation are two sides of the same coin. In all areas of our social life, we have to adapt to changing conditions. This applies, for example, to urban development and the health sector.
- Climate adaptation is a basic prerequisite. The sustainable management of climate change must always be seen in harmony with emission reduction and carbon cycle management. Climate adaptation is a cross-sectional task and it is a good idea to rely on nature-based solutions that make the landscape more resilient and thus safer. This must also be implemented with regard to flood protection.
- Climate protection is done locally. In many cases, our municipalities are responsible for implementing climate protection and adaptation measures. To increase synergies, we are strengthening the partnership between the federal, state and local governments and clarifying long-term financing.

Implementing emissions trading correctly

Emissions trading can do more. Implemented correctly, it is a market-based instrument that can efficiently limit the amount of emissions and protect the climate in the best possible way. We are expanding CO2 pricing into a key instrument in the mix of instruments and returning its revenues to consumers and the economy. The market should decide where and how emissions are avoided. This is our way: saving CO2 where it is most efficient.

- Advancing emissions trading internationally. We want to strengthen it in the EU as a central climate instrument by gradually involving all sectors with their energy-related emissions.
- Global challenges need global partnerships. On the way to internationally comparable standards, we rely on cooperation such as climate and energy partnerships and protection against the transfer of CO2 emissions. We support and use carbon markets for the international trade of emission reductions.
- Establish a circular CO2 economy. We are committed to a comprehensive CO2 circular economy with natural and technical CO2 use and storage. We are creating the necessary framework conditions to enable Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCU), Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and Direct Air Capture (DACCS) as well as the necessary transport infrastructure.
- For more climate efficiency. In the future, investments in climate technologies and energy efficiency will be much faster and better tax-deductible.
- Relieve people. In order to relieve consumers and companies quickly and efficiently with social compensation, we are creating a climate bonus. With the CO2 revenues, we will first reduce the electricity tax and grid fees. Higher burdens due to rising CO2 taxes must also lead to higher relief.

Sustainable use of resources

Our mission is to use the resources given to us sparingly and efficiently. It is about our economic sovereignty, sustainability and intergenerational justice, about our lifestyle and prosperity. We think in cycles and reduce resource consumption.

- Economic activity, yes, but sustainably. We want a responsible circular economy. Our task is to close material cycles – for materials, but also for water, heat or carbon. At the same time, we are strengthening the shared economy.
- Recycle in a way that is open to technology and materials. To this end, we are breaking down legal barriers, focusing on modularity and innovative product design, and enabling a broad mix of technologies.

Doing environmental protection together

For us, environmental policy means looking at water, soil and air and protecting our biodiversity. The preservation of natural resources, habitats and species is of central importance.

- Preserve species and habitats. We protect endangered species and their habitats. To this end, we are upgrading the quality of protected areas and strengthening the networking of habitats. Modern species protection requires a regular review of the applicable protection regulations in order to maintain the balance of species.
- Protect and rewet peatlands. Peatlands are indispensable CO₂ sinks. Together with the property owners, we want to intensify the protection of peatlands and provide incentives for rewetting projects.
- Living from and with the sea. We preserve oceans as resilient ecosystems and enable integrated, nature-friendly use for transport, energy and military purposes. The same applies to catching fish and seafood.
- Protect oceans properly. We are campaigning for the marine protection agreements to be further developed. We are particularly concerned with the fight against marine pollution and contaminated munitions in the North Sea and Baltic Sea.
- Flood and coastal protection protects lives. In order to protect people in endangered regions, coastal and flood protection is a priority for us. We want to move away from the obligation to compensate for coastal and flood protection measures.
- For compulsory insurance. Extreme weather events are on the rise in Germany. Comprehensive compulsory insurance for natural hazards is the right financial loss prevention. We will therefore introduce it and thus distribute the burden fairly in the interests of the taxpayers.
- Rewarding ecosystem services. We support farmers and foresters, forest owners, hunters and fishermen in preserving ecosystems and their services. One approach is temporary nature conservation, which is set up in harmony with all user groups.

- Water as the highest good. To this end, we are raising awareness and, together with the states and municipalities, ensuring a good ecological status of our waters. We particularly protect our high-quality and valuable drinking, mineral, medicinal and groundwater resources. We are paying particular attention to regions that are increasingly affected by drought. We also use digital solutions for safe supply and disposal. To keep our waters clean, we rely on the polluter-pays principle.
- Make better use of space. We use land and water sustainably. To this end, we are reducing land sealing, supporting smart land use through dual and multiple uses, and improving compensatory measures. Innovative approaches are needed here.
- Do not ban per- and polyfluorinated chemicals (PFAS) in principle. We protect health and the environment and also ensure the availability of necessary chemicals. To achieve this, we take a risk-based approach. We reject blanket bans on substances that are currently non-replaceable, which are elementary for our health, our public services and also for our economy. Instead, we are investing in research into substitutes and closed loops.
- Environmental crime is not a trivial offense. Environmental pollution, illegal animal trade, illegal killing and torture of animals are crimes that must be punished just as consistently. We are continuing to develop the rules for trading in international environmental and climate certificates.
- Push ahead with the search for a repository. We are accelerating the process of searching for a repository through adjustments and ruling out geologically unsuitable regions more quickly.

Yes to research, innovation and new technologies

Our plan:

Get started with innovations and technologies.

Make you want to be an entrepreneur.

Leverage the potential of digitization and artificial intelligence.

Make better use of data.

We act.

Get started with innovations and technologies

The public debate often revolves around the question of how we want to live in Germany. But above all, we have to answer the question of what we want to live on in the future. We need a high-tech agenda for Germany. After all, investment in research, innovation, technology and transfer (FITT) is the key to a competitive economy with well-paid jobs. We ensure that our

outstanding research landscape pays off again. We strengthen universities and research institutions, start-ups and young technology companies in all regions so that spin-offs and the transfer to marketable solutions are more successful. "Made in Germany" must be a seal of quality for cutting-edge technology. We will once again make the greatest possible increase in the performance and competitiveness of Germany as a location for research and innovation a priority for the whole of Germany.

- Making Germany fit for the future. We are presenting a powerful programme for research, innovation, technologies, transfer and entrepreneurship – a high-tech agenda for Germany.
- Strengthen innovation and technology location. We want to develop Germany as a centre of excellence and innovation for future technologies. This applies both to established areas such as aerospace and to new technologies such as quantum computing, AI, fusion energy, biotechnology, battery cells and microelectronics. We will pursue a new ambitious space strategy.
- Advancing EU projects. The EU's "Important Project of Common European Interest" (IPCEI) or the "European Chips Act" projects serve the competitiveness of the EU as a whole and thus also of Germany. We are committed to these important funding instruments and their most effective use in Germany.
- Create the Innovation Freedom Act for more freedom in research. We want to give research more freedom and free it from a funding bureaucracy that is too fragmented. To this end, we are amending the Academic Freedom Act. This will also apply to all non-profit research institutions, most of which are state-funded. In addition, we are focusing on facilitating the transfer of research results, giving priority to spin-offs and improving the framework conditions for cooperation with regional partners from SMEs, start-ups and public institutions.
- Expand basic research. Germany has basic research that is respected worldwide. We are building on this strength and giving more weight to knowledge-driven basic research in the budget.
- Research from a single source. We are continuing to develop the tax research allowance as a low-threshold instrument. We bundle the federal government's research funding. In addition, we are eliminating duplicate structures and multiple leadership in the government.
- Paying more attention to small and medium-sized businesses. We are simplifying access to federal research and innovation programmes for small and medium-sized enterprises. We reduce bureaucracy to an absolute minimum. We are strengthening the Central Innovation Programme for SMEs (ZIM), as well as the Industrial Collective Research (IGF), the INNO-KOM innovation competence programme and KMU-innovativ.
- Strengthen applied and industry-related research. We are putting an end to the current discrimination of medium-sized research companies that are not among the large non-university research institutions. We are eliminating the ban on preferential treatment for non-profit research institutions so that they can more easily recruit qualified personnel. In this

way, we give applied and industry-related research in particular the freedom it needs for its international competitiveness.

- New champions "Made in Germany". We want more start-ups from cutting-edge research that develop into global market leaders. To this end, we measure research institutions by the success of their spin-offs, in particular by the venture capital invested. Research institutions are to benefit from their spin-offs. We are strengthening technology transfer to SMEs. We are leveraging government research funding more strongly with private capital.
- Secure higher expenses. We will ensure that business and government spend 3.5 percent of gross domestic product on research and development annually by 2030.
- Great importance of marine and polar research for sustainable development. That is why we are strengthening research in this field. To this end, we are further developing the German Alliance for Marine Research and consistently continuing the renewal of the German research fleet.

What the appetite for entrepreneurship

The economic success of our country is shaped by the people who have the courage to turn an idea into an opportunity and develop a business model from it. We want to further strengthen this entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurial courage – across all regions and industries, from social innovations to high technology. Our goal is also for more women to bring our country forward with innovative start-ups. In addition, we promote a positive social attitude towards entrepreneurship and self-employment.

- Promote start-ups and spin-offs from scientific institutions. To this end, we are launching a national patent and spin-off strategy with best practice standards.
- Reward inventiveness. We enshrine in law a privilege for inventors at universities and research institutions to exploit their inventions. We ensure that researchers at universities and non-university research institutions who foreseeably transfer their service inventions into a concrete start-up project retain the rights of use to them.
- More speed with spin-offs. We work with the relevant stakeholders to develop model contracts for spin-offs as well as for cooperation with start-ups and already established small and medium-sized enterprises. In this way, we make contract negotiations more predictable, faster and more reliable for the parties involved.
- Remove hurdles. We are introducing a "start-up protection zone" and freeing founders from bureaucratic regulations in the start-up phase. We are improving the compatibility of self-employment and family.
- Short distances, big impact. We ensure that only one office is responsible for start-ups, company relocations and closures. By bundling responsibilities in this way, we reduce the hurdles for start-ups and strengthen Germany as a location for innovation.

- Establish Germany as a venture capital and startup location. We are expanding start-up financing for innovative companies and creating attractive tax conditions for venture capital. We are continuing to expand the existing Future Fund in order to ensure capital resources in the cost-intensive growth phase.

Leveraging the potential of digitalization and artificial intelligence

The digitization of all areas of life and the use of AI can make our everyday lives easier, optimize business models and open up lucrative new ones. We are going on the offensive and making it clear: Digitization as well as sovereign AI and cloud applications are not a luxury, but the decisive prerequisite for the re-industrialization of our country. We need their innovative strength to be competitive again. We want to shape the development and use of AI systems. To do this, we need high-performance digital infrastructures, especially strong data centers.

- Implement Digital Citizen Account. We want a secure digital identity for all citizens with their own mailbox, especially for administrative procedures. We will further develop the so-called BundID into a uniform DeutschlandID. In addition, eIDAS compatibility must be ensured.
- All documents always at hand. We are committed to ensuring that citizens receive a digital file that bundles all relevant documents and enables them to deal with the authorities in a tailored, digital way. In this way, we strengthen informational self-determination and simplify administrative action.
- Everything with your smartphone. Together with our European partners, we are pushing through the introduction of a Europe-wide digital ID function via smartphone, for example for ID cards and driver's licenses.
- Freedom for AI. The EU regulation ("AI Act") must be implemented and further developed responsibly, with little bureaucracy and open to innovation. We strictly reject overfulfilment. We promote and accelerate AI research, support the development of applications and enable freedom. We must master the risks of AI, but under no circumstances must we miss out on the opportunities and advantages due to overregulation. Security authorities must be able to use AI to the extent necessary.
- Strengthening AI in SMEs and science. To this end, we are working with partners from the business world to set up industry-specific SME consulting. We are launching an initiative "AI in SMEs" tailored to universities of applied sciences (HAW). The aim is to provide low-threshold funding for transfer projects in cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises and universities of applied sciences. In addition, computing capacities for research and start-ups in the AI sector must be built up and permanently upgraded. We create easy access for small and medium-sized enterprises, founders and scientists.
- Manage faster with AI. With the use of AI, we are building an efficient, fully digitalised administration for citizens and companies in Germany that can provide low-threshold and

user-friendly services around the clock, seven days a week. In the case of clear facts, we want to use AI to achieve much faster decisions – whereby citizens always have the right to individual review, of course.

- Get out of the supply hole. We are expanding high-performance broadband and mobile networks further across the country, especially in rural areas. We remove the remaining obstacles. With fiber optics, we are making our networks future-proof. To this end, we rely on more competition, cooperation models and reliable funding. We want to get an effective acceleration law off the ground as quickly as possible and ignite the approval turbo. This includes, in particular, placing both mobile communications and fibre-optic expansion in the overriding public interest until all expansion targets have been achieved.
- Tighten governance for digitalization. We bundle responsibility for infrastructure, data policy, AI, platforms and digital services, administrative digitalisation and modern governance. To this end, we are setting up a Federal Digital Ministry. We anchor the entire procurement of IT in the federal government and the uniform interfaces for IT systems in the public sector here. We are also bundling the digital resources in the subordinate area.
- For a true digital union. Our goal is a European Digital Single Market that continues to grow and offers benefits for the economy and citizens. We also have to become more independent. Digital sovereignty is a question of freedom, security and prosperity. This requires clear, uniform rules, modern competition law and high-quality digital infrastructure, in particular a European cloud, as well as European storage and computing capacities.

Making better use of data

Many companies have realized that data is the gold of the 21st century. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of potential left behind in the use and sharing of data. The main reasons are over-regulation and legal uncertainty. The data protection rules often prove to be impractical in everyday life. We are clearly changing course and turning data protection policy into a real data opportunity policy with new pragmatism.

- Strengthen personal responsibility. Instead of minimizing data, we focus on data sovereignty and data care: Everyone must be able to determine for themselves when, where and for what purpose data is collected and used from them. Data collectors and data processors must meet due diligence standards.
- Use the opportunities of open data for innovation and growth. To this end, we promote the automated collection and use of data. Broad availability is indispensable, especially for real breakthroughs in AI.
- Making research results accessible. We are enacting a modern Research Data Act in order to enable a significant increase in research in socially relevant areas by making data available and usable. We are creating a suitable framework for even higher quality assurance and

efficiency in science and research.

- Data protection, yes, but pragmatic. We are making the General Data Protection Regulation suitable for everyday use. More standardised procedures are needed, for example for workshops and doctors' surgeries as well as for exchange with and between state authorities. Freedom of contract must also be retained with regard to data. The existing double structures for data protection at federal and state level must be dismantled.

Yes to a strong and just welfare state

Our plan:

Promoting and demanding must always apply.

Making employment agencies fit for the future.

Strengthen collective bargaining partnership, co-determination and wage floor.

We act.

Promoting and demanding must always apply

The so-called "citizen's allowance" reduces the incentives to take up work. It only promotes and does not demand more, it does more harm than good, and divides our country. We stand for a new basic income that reintroduces the principle of "support and demand" and strengthens cohesion because it makes it clear: Our state supports people who are dependent on help. At the same time, he makes a clear demand: Those who can work must also work and must not live at the expense of the community.

- Abolish "citizen's money". We are abolishing the so-called "citizen's money" in its current form and replacing it with a new basic income. We are reintroducing the priority of placement. If someone is fundamentally unwilling to accept work, the state must assume that he or she is not in need. Then the basic income must be completely abolished.
- Strengthen incentives to work. We are reforming the additional income limits and transfer withdrawal rates to increase incentives to take up work or work more.
- Mediate, mediate, mediate. Many people have been dependent on support for many years. We focus the job centres on intensive and qualifying support for aid recipients.
- Part-time language acquisition. In many sectors and professions, integration or language courses that have not been completed are no reason to postpone job placement. We ensure that language acquisition also takes place while working.
- Strengthen the obligation to cooperate, abolish the waiting period. Personal discussions with the employment agencies are essential for advice, qualification and placement. We will more

consistently demand and sanction the obligations of basic income recipients to cooperate. In the future, we will again carry out an asset check from the first day of basic insurance and make the savings dependent on the number of years of work.

- Modernize the annual adjustment of the basic income. Many employees could not understand the disproportionate increase in the so-called "citizen's allowance". Because their wages have not risen to the same extent. We want to prevent such cases in the future.
- Combating social benefit abuse. Large-scale abuse of social benefits, both at home and by people living abroad, must be stopped. To this end, we want a complete exchange of data between the social, financial, security and immigration authorities. We are further strengthening the financial control of undeclared work and are thus taking tougher action against those who engage in illegal employment or work "illegally".

Making job placement future-proof

The situation on the labour market remains tense, and unemployment insurance is under pressure. Now it is important to focus on the core tasks – in addition to unemployment and short-time work benefits, advice, support and placement of the unemployed. With this in mind, we are making unemployment insurance fit for the future.

- Stable financing of the Federal Employment Agency and the job centres. There must be no shift from tax-financed expenditure to contribution-financed expenditure. We want a reliable build-up of the Federal Employment Agency's reserves, because this is the only way to react to possible future crises.
- Strengthen the use of AI. AI in the offices makes sense because it provides targeted support for individual advice and creates time freedom.
- One-stop service. In the future, social benefits must not only reach those entitled to benefits with little bureaucracy and digitally, but also from a single source. In this way, we help the beneficiaries and avoid multiple services.

Strengthening collective bargaining partnership, co-determination and minimum wage

The social partnership between employers and trade unions has made Germany strong. Our goal is a higher level of collective bargaining coverage. Co-determination in companies has a long tradition in Germany. Works councils are an important part of the social partnership. At the same time, our working life has changed considerably. That is why we are bringing company co-determination up to date. The Union introduced the statutory minimum wage in 2014. It is an important part of the labour market order. We stand by the statutory minimum wage and the independent minimum wage commission. Wage determination must continue to be a matter for the social partners and not for politicians. We reject a political minimum wage. We support good wage development. Because it testifies to performance and productivity.

- Strengthen the general applicability of collective agreements. The social partners must continue to play the central role in the collective bargaining committee.
- More tariff opening clauses. In this way, we enable regulations that can be more suitable for both employees and local companies than inflexible flat-rate regulations in the area.
- Protect positive and negative freedom of association. By amending the Collective Agreements Act, we are supporting the willingness to commit to collective agreements.
- Protect works councils. With the Works Council Modernisation Act in 2021, we sent a signal for the works council work of the future. We examine the need for further action and ensure that the establishment of works councils is not prevented.
- Online and analogue. We enable online works council meetings and online works meetings as equivalent alternatives to face-to-face formats. In addition, the option of voting online is to be anchored in the Works Constitution Act.
- Digital access right. We want to clarify digital access rights in company co-determination on the basis of existing analogue access rights.
- For a strong minimum wage commission. We are counting on good cooperation between employers and employees and expect a consensual decision to be reached in the independent Minimum Wage Commission. We do not want a minimum wage decision in the German Bundestag. This is an expression of our respect for social partnership and collective bargaining autonomy – and for us the key to good and fair wage determination.
- Labour market policy is the responsibility of the individual Member States. We reject a European unemployment insurance scheme.

Yes to more property, asset accumulation and secure retirement provision

Our plan:

New impetus for more property ownership in the country.

Secure your pension and retirement provision in the long term.

We act.

New impetus for more ownership in the country

More people should have the opportunity to build up their own property – especially residential property. They should participate better in the success of companies and their productive capital. In doing so, we finally want to keep a promise of the social market economy that has not yet been fulfilled: new prosperity through wealth accumulation, especially for small and medium incomes; new opportunities in retirement provision – without cutting back on statutory pensions. Left-wing politics means a distribution dispute and more burdens for the young generation. We are

committed to greater prosperity for all.

- Make your dream of owning your own home come true. We support families in particular in fulfilling their dream of owning their own home. Länder are to be able to grant an allowance for real estate transfer tax of 250,000 euros per adult and 150,000 euros for each child when purchasing owner-occupied residential property for the first time.
- No wealth tax. We don't want to punish people who have worked hard for and built something. Instead, we want to support all people in building up their own assets. We reject a wealth tax.
- Bequeath your own home at a lower price. We are significantly increasing the inheritance tax allowances. This means that the home can be inherited tax-free to a greater extent.
- Make employee share ownership more attractive. We are focusing above all on a clear legal framework, less bureaucracy and higher tax allowances. We are committed to harmonizing the rules in the EU and reducing bureaucratic hurdles. We are significantly increasing the income tax allowance for employee equity investments and ensuring that shareholdings are generally only taxed at the time of sale.
- Provide more support for low-income earners in building up wealth. We are introducing a capital formation premium in which we merge the employee savings allowance and the housing construction premium. We are significantly increasing the subsidy amount and standardising the income limits. In this way, we also support low-income earners in particular.
- More attractive capital-forming benefits. We want to introduce an allowance for income from capital-forming benefits in order to make them more attractive to employees. In order to provide incentives for long-term savings, we will extend the holding period to ten years. The allowance is to increase for each year for which additional savings are made.

Securing pensions and retirement provision in the long term

More than ever, in the interests of a strong and stable pension system, our country must finally regain economic growth. After all, the more people who are subject to social security contributions, the better it is for stable social security systems and pensions. We focus on security and reliability in pensions, intergenerational justice, incentives for voluntary work and a strengthening of supplementary company and private provision.

- For reliability in the retirement age. We are sticking to the existing legal regulation on the retirement age. We are retaining the provision for particularly long-term insured persons with 45 years of insurance with a view to planning security for companies and those who are close to retirement.
- No pension cuts. If people have worked full-time for 45 years and paid contributions, raised children or cared for relatives, the statutory pension must be significantly higher than the basic

security in old age. With the CDU/CSU, there will be no pension cuts. Our goal: a stable pension level guaranteed by economic growth and further rising pensions. Those who have to retire prematurely should be able to rely on adequate old-age security.

- Ensure contribution stability – in the sense of intergenerational justice. We don't play young and old off against each other. Our goal is therefore to keep contribution rates stable, also to protect small and medium-sized incomes in particular.
- More incentives for voluntary longer working hours. We want more flexibility in the transition from work to retirement. We make working in old age attractive with an active pension. Anyone who reaches the statutory retirement age and continues to work voluntarily receives their salary up to 2,000 euros per month tax-free. In addition, we are significantly raising the additional income limits for widows' pensions.
- Strengthen occupational and private pension provision. Old-age provision is to be based on several pillars in a stable manner, i.e. the statutory pension is to be effectively supplemented by additional occupational and private provision. In particular, we want to support small and medium-sized employers in concluding company pensions.
- Old-age provision from childhood onwards – introduce an early start pension. Young people should make their own capital-funded provisions as early as possible. In this way, they develop an awareness of retirement provision and capital formation. For this reason, we will pay 10 euros per month for each child from the age of 6 to 18 into an individual, funded and privately organised retirement savings account. The amount saved during this time can be further saved through private payments from the age of 18 until retirement. Only in this way does the early start pension unfold its full effect through a return-oriented, capital-funded investment without guarantees. The income from the custody account is to be tax-free until retirement. The savings capital is protected from state access and is only paid out when the standard retirement age is reached.
- Old-age provision for the self-employed. We are introducing a mandatory pension scheme for self-employed people who are not adequately protected elsewhere.
- Strengthen social elections. Self-administration is a valuable asset. It must be a matter of course to participate in social elections online. We are abolishing peace elections and providing real choice between candidates.

Yes to agriculture with a future

Our plan:

Relieve the burden on agriculture.

Securing agricultural production.

We act.

Relieving the burden on agriculture

Our farmers operate in an environmentally friendly manner and make an important contribution to food security and landscape conservation. They deserve recognition, respect and trust. We are providing relief through better framework conditions and planning security – so that a farmer can be a farmer again.

- Relieve agricultural businesses. We are reintroducing the agricultural diesel rebate in full. We exempt alternative fuels such as biofuels and synthetic fuels in agriculture and forestry from energy tax.
- Provide planning security. We ensure that the financing of the "Joint Task for the Improvement of Agricultural Structures and Coastal Protection" is secured.
- Continue to provide good resources for the independent EU agricultural budget; CAP. In Brussels, we are campaigning for the agricultural budget to remain well funded. Our goal is also to massively simplify the Common Agricultural Policy for farmers and make it practicable in terms of reducing bureaucracy, transparency and efficiency, which also makes many small-scale controls superfluous. In addition, de minimis limits must be extended. The goals of competitiveness, food security, environmental and climate protection, as well as rural development and agricultural structures are of equal importance to us.
- Ensure generational change. To this end, young farmers must be better supported across the board. We ensure planning and financing security so that our companies have a future.
- Achieve ecological goals. We rely on incentives, contractual nature conservation, the reward for nature and environmental protection as well as innovations. We reject the forced closure of areas. Conventional and organic agriculture are equally important to us. We are amending the Federal Nature Conservation Act to the effect that the maintenance and management of biotopes can be compensated. We are strengthening the bioeconomy.
- Clean out bureaucracy. We are noticeably reducing reporting and documentation obligations, opposing new EU obligations at an early stage and instead focusing on the market economy and trust. As a matter of principle, we implement European law requirements on a one-to-one basis at national level and do not go beyond the minimum level of regulation envisaged. Specifically, we want to dispense with the material flow balance in fertiliser law, permanently avert an EU land law and defuse the EU taxonomy for agriculture and forestry as well.

Securing agricultural production

Our farmers, together with gardeners, fruit and vegetable growers, winegrowers and fishermen, ensure good and healthy food. To secure agricultural production, we rely on innovative technologies, the preservation of agricultural land and sustainable management.

- Modern plant breeding. We ensure that digitalization, precision agriculture and plant breeding can unfold. The regulation of new breeding technologies must be practicable. We support modern breeding instruments such as "smart breeding".
- For better plant protection. We are committed to the use of chemical-synthetic pesticides. We are abolishing the so-called "Future Programme for Plant Protection". We are adapting the approval process so that innovative products are available more quickly and the use and promotion of biological and risk-reduced agents is simplified.
- Support agricultural livestock farmers. We support our farmers in species-appropriate animal husbandry for more animal welfare. We are in favour of animal husbandry, especially for the continuation of combined farming and against a reduction or quotas. We ensure reliable financing of animal welfare-friendly stables and remove hurdles under licensing law. Consumers must be clearly and bindingly informed about animal welfare and the origin of animal products.
- No sell-off of farmland. Innovations and new business models also require capital. However, we reject a sell-off of agricultural land to capital investors.
- Manage the forest sustainably. We support forestry and hunting, which ensure the diverse functions of the forest through sustainable management and use. At the same time, we promote the development and conversion of climate-stable and site-adapted forests and want to use and further develop the diverse applications of wood. This includes a sensible use of energy from regional forestry.
- Regulate wolf populations. Our goal is active inventory management. Wolves must be able to be hunted – depending on the region – so that fewer grazing animals are killed. To this end, we are adjusting the protection status of the wolf and including it in the Federal Hunting Act. As a basis for this, we are adopting the regulation of the Habitats Directive in the Federal Nature Conservation Act. We are striving for comparable regulations for other species that are no longer endangered, such as rooks and cormorants.
- Provide security to the land and agriculture. We include food security as a state goal in the Basic Law. This is particularly important for legislation and courts to ensure that agricultural concerns are adequately taken into account.
- When it comes to nutrition, focus on responsible citizens. We rely on nutrition education and good information, but not on ineffective advertising bans or incentive taxes. We want mandatory, practical origin labelling for food.
- For sustainable domestic fisheries. To this end, we are promoting the modernisation of the ageing fishing fleet and the implementation of environmentally friendly propulsion technologies.

III. Our plan for a country that is free and safe again

Trust in the rule of law is declining, crime is rising. Police officers experience what other rescue and emergency services are also familiar with: a lack of respect, insults, increasingly brutal attacks. But our security is also threatened from the outside. The Russian dictator has started a war that also challenges us as Europeans and members of NATO.

There is no question that the turning point has arrived. Now it is high time to implement it politically. To this end, Germany must above all become capable of defending itself again by strengthening our Bundeswehr as quickly and comprehensively as possible. We must take on more responsibility in foreign policy, especially as a strong engine of the European Union.

Freedom presupposes security. Only those who live safely and feel safe can claim their freedom rights. To do this, our country needs a change of policy now.

We want a country that is free and safe again.

We want to bring Germany forward again.

A Germany of which we can be proud again.

Yes to law and order

Our plan:

Zero tolerance strategy.

Strong security authorities and an efficient judiciary.

Appreciation for security authorities and emergency services.

Creating security in the digital space.

Turning point in civil protection and civil defence.

We act.

Zero-tolerance strategy

We have a zero-tolerance strategy in the fight against crime. Anyone who does not comply with the law must be punished immediately.

- Strengthen safety on site, in everyday life and in the neighborhood. Everyone must be able to move freely in everyday life, on the way to work and in their free time without fear. We oppose the neglect of public space, because it is often the starting point for crime. We call for the

expansion of video protection in public places of danger and systems for automated facial recognition at train stations, airports and other crime hotspots to identify serious offenders.

- Strength of the law instead of the law of the strongest. We are tightening criminal law in order to better protect women, the elderly, children, people with disabilities and other particularly vulnerable groups. We are increasing the maximum penalty for stalking. We will punish bodily injuries, especially if they are committed with a knife, and group rape much more severely.
- Utmost attention to the protection of children and women. We do not leave the victims of domestic violence, especially women and children, alone. Your protection is a priority for us. We are therefore developing a security concept and strengthening the women's shelters. We are increasingly using electronic ankle bracelets so that perpetrators of violence against women keep their distance from their former partners.
- Protect children preventively. We ensure that where children are cared for, there are binding and standardised protection concepts across the board. In terms of access rights, the following should apply: If a parent inflicts violence on the child, the child must be excluded from care.
- Effectively protect prostitutes. There is still exploitation, violence and abuse. Human trafficking, forced prostitution and clan crime are a great evil and must be fought. The "three-pillar model" can serve as a guide. A special focus will be on prevention work.
- No smoking weed. The traffic light has failed with its cannabis law. It does not limit consumption, nor does it push back the black market. Instead, we are witnessing brutal gang wars. We therefore withdraw the legalization of this drug.
- Equal rights, equal responsibility. According to the legislator's idea, the application of juvenile criminal law to adolescents (18 to 21 years of age) should remain the exception and adult criminal law should apply as a rule. In practice, however, this ratio has long since turned into the opposite. For us, it is clear: In the future, general criminal law should apply to all adolescents (18 to 21 years of age).
- Check the minimum age of criminal responsibility. Children under the age of 14 have so far not been culpable under criminal law. It is questionable whether this age limit is still appropriate for the current maturity level of children. We have this checked by a scientific study in order to adjust the minimum age of criminal responsibility if necessary. In any case, however, it is important to establish court proceedings that deal with the crimes in the presence of the parents and children of the public prosecutor's office and the juvenile court. This is demanded by respect for the victims.

Strong security authorities and an efficient judiciary

Strong security authorities and an efficient judiciary protect our rule of law and enable freedom. They need sufficient and well-qualified personnel as well as modern powers for their work. We are committed to closer cooperation and networking, including with international partners.

- Data protection must not become the protection of perpetrators. The protection of the population and the security interests of our state must take precedence over the data protection interests of the individual. No one who violates our laws should be given false protection by the anonymity of the Internet.
- Minimum long-term retention of IP addresses. In the fight against serious crimes, such as sexual violence against children, or to prevent terrorist attacks, we oblige Internet service providers to store IP addresses and port numbers for a minimum period of time.
- More rights in the digital world. We give our security authorities the widest possible authority to use electronic facial recognition and allow them to use modern software to analyse large amounts of data, police databases and social networks. We are creating digital powers such as source telecommunications surveillance, online searches and automatic data analysis using AI for all federal security agencies.
- Against burglary and grandchild trick. We are expanding the possibility of monitoring telecommunications and evaluating radio cells. This is especially true for crimes such as burglary and grandchild tricks, which cut deeply into the victims' sense of security.
- New "Pact for the Rule of Law". We need better staffing of our courts, competitive salaries, a boost in digitalisation and faster court proceedings. The punishment must follow the deed on the heels. Relieving staff is mainly possible with the help of technical processes and the support of AI.

Appreciation for security authorities and emergency services

We stand firmly by the side of our security authorities, customs and our emergency services in the police, fire brigade, technical relief agency, aid organisations, rescue services and the Bundeswehr. They deserve support, support and appreciation.

- Better protect emergency services. Attacks on those who protect us will be punished more harshly. We also include health professionals in this protection.
- Improve the personal protection of police officers. Police officers must be well equipped so that they can protect us and themselves well. We ensure this, for example by equipping the entire area with distance electric impulse devices (TA-SER) and the use of bodycams – even for operations in living spaces.
- Trust in our security authorities. Where there are allegations against them, they must be clarified by public prosecutors and courts. We are abolishing special investigators, such as the federal police commissioner set up by the traffic light. We reject the introduction of mandatory identification for federal police officers. We also do not oblige them to issue an inspection receipt on the occasion of an inspection. We need our security agencies in the fight against crime and not with bureaucracy.

- Recognizing dangers at an early stage. Our intelligence services fulfil a central task by clarifying dangers to our state and our free democratic basic order at an early stage. We give them the necessary powers to fulfil their legal mandate in the best possible way.
- Amendment of the Federal Disciplinary Act and the Soldiers' Act. Enemies of our free democratic basic order must be removed from the public service more quickly. However, we refuse to dismiss a civil servant or temporary and professional soldier without a court order by a simple administrative act.

Creating security in the digital space

The number, complexity and severity of cyberattacks are constantly growing. They hit the immune system of our country. The spectrum of perpetrators ranges from petty criminals to organised hacker groups and terrorists to state actors. But we are not defenseless. With networked resilience, we will increase our effectiveness.

- Respond to dynamic developments in cyberspace. We equip our security authorities with the necessary powers in cybersecurity, with specialist personnel and modern infrastructure. This also requires competitive pay. We act according to the principle: What is forbidden in the analogue world must also be forbidden in the digital world.
- Further deepen cooperation between the federal and state governments. That is why we are expanding the Federal Office for Information Security into a central office for information and cybersecurity issues. In addition to the Federal Office for the Protection of Constitution and the Federal Criminal Police Office, it is intended to form a strong third pillar of the cybersecurity architecture under the leadership of the Federal Ministry of the Interior.
- Strengthen the National Cyber Defense Center and Cyber Reserve. We are developing it further so that it can coordinate a nationwide defence against dangers and attacks in complex damage situations. In order to make use of the extensive know-how outside the Bundeswehr, we want to strengthen the cyber reserve.
- Strengthen cyber defenses. Together with the federal states, we are creating the legal, organisational and technical prerequisites for a strong active cyber defence by the federal government. We must be able to investigate and prevent cyber attacks, especially from abroad. We are better interlinking civilian and military cyber defence capabilities. We regularly conduct joint cyber exercises at the federal, state and municipal levels.
- Provide security on the net. We ensure that adequate protection of children and young people is also guaranteed on the Internet. This also applies to social media as important platforms for exchange and information. We are ensuring that the implementation of the Digital Services Act focuses on greater transparency, the fight against disinformation, and the protection of minors and the media.

Turning point in civil protection and civil defence

Civil protection and civil defence are facing immense challenges: extreme weather conditions, pandemics, terrorism, hybrid warfare. Germany must become more crisis-proof and resilient in order to be prepared for these dangers. Resilience is the order of the day.

- Conclude a "pact for civil protection" with the federal states. We ensure sustainable financial investment in civil protection and disaster protection equipment, especially in accommodation, vehicles and IT infrastructure.
- For a strong civil defence. We are setting up a special programme for civilian defence, continuing to expand the warning infrastructure until the gaps are closed, developing a concept for setting up a "civilian reserve" and involving so-called spontaneous helpers more closely.
- Expand crisis competence among the population. Everyone is called upon to actively participate in the context of self-help and to take appropriate precautions. We are also strengthening knowledge of how to behave in the event of floods, power outages and other crises.
- Protection of our cultural assets. In order to better protect them from dangers such as natural disasters, terror, war or sabotage, a national strategy is needed. This must include effective measures to protect the status quo, to draw up emergency plans and to safeguard the operational process for the universal service.

Yes to stopping illegal migration

Our plan:

Stop illegal migration.

To stand by our humanitarian responsibility.

We act.

Stopping illegal migration

We also made mistakes during our time in government – and learned from them. In a new government, we have been working from day one for a fundamental change in migration policy. We are also aligning Germany's foreign and European policy as well as development cooperation with this goal. We want to regain control over migration. We want to stop illegal migration and limit humanitarian admissions to a level that no longer overwhelms Germany's capabilities. Our national asylum system needs speedy procedures, secure identity checks and consistent implementation of asylum decisions.

- Combine border controls with rejections. We will immediately enforce a de facto stop of admissions. To this end, we reject those at the German borders who enter Germany from

another EU member state or the Schengen area and want to apply for asylum with us. We are extending the necessary controls at the German borders for as long as it is necessary. At the same time, we are investing in state-of-the-art border security technology, such as drones, night vision cameras and thermal imaging cameras.

- No reunification. We are suspending family reunification with beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and ending all voluntary admission programmes.
- Priority of benefits in kind. In general, benefits in kind should take precedence over cash benefits wherever possible. The payment card is to be introduced nationwide and restrictively in all federal states. For those obliged to leave the country, we align social benefits with the principle of "bed, bread and soap" established by the courts and, wherever possible, provide for a complete exclusion of benefits.
- Abolish subsidiary protection status. We are working at European level to return to the original spirit of the Geneva Refugee Convention.
- Get Ukrainians into work. Newly arriving refugees from Ukraine are no longer to receive so-called "citizen's money", but benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act. At the same time, we are making every effort to ensure that they come into work immediately and become independent of state benefits. We are simplifying the procedures for professional recognition and strengthening the learning of the German language "on the job".
- Designate more "safe countries of origin". In order to speed up asylum procedures and facilitate returns, we classify other countries as "safe countries of origin". In addition, we will increasingly conclude readmission agreements with the main countries of origin.
- Increase the number of returns. Asylum seekers without entitlement to protection must leave our country again. If this is not done voluntarily, the obligation to leave the country must be enforced by the state. We are drafting a comprehensive law to increase the number of returns. We want to support the European border protection agency Frontex in further increasing the number of returns, and are therefore also advocating stricter rules in Europe. The federal government should continue to support the states in procuring travel documents and implementing repatriations and further expand this support. We want to create central asylum procedures for accelerated procedures and federal departure centres to facilitate repatriations. We want to deport people to Afghanistan and Syria on a regular basis – especially criminals and those who pose a threat.
- Give the Federal Police more powers. The Federal Police must be given the competence to temporarily detain or detain foreigners who are obliged to leave the country in order to ensure their deportation. We are changing the law in such a way that every offender and endangerer who is obliged to leave the country can be detained for an unlimited period of time after his detention until he leaves voluntarily or is able to be forcibly deported.

We stand by our humanitarian responsibility

In the long term, we can only achieve our goal through a fundamental change in European asylum law. We are therefore initiating a reform process in the EU that implements the concept of safe third countries. We will continue to live up to our humanitarian responsibility and will continue to grant protection and residence in Germany to people in need of protection within the framework of a quota solution. In doing so, we again make a clear distinction between humanitarian admission and the immigration of skilled workers.

- Asylum procedures in safe third countries. Protection by Europe does not have to mean protection in Europe. Everyone who applies for asylum in Europe should be transferred to a safe third country and go through an asylum procedure there. In the event of a positive outcome, the safe third country will provide the applicant with protection on the spot. With such a model, Europe is smashing the inhumane business of smugglers and smugglers. In this case, it no longer makes sense to embark on the dangerous and expensive path to Europe.
- Protect the most vulnerable. Following the successful implementation of the concept of safer third countries, we take in a limited contingent of people in real need of protection directly from abroad every year. In doing so, we specifically address the weakest. In this way, we are ensuring more humanity in asylum law. Because so far, the dangers of the Sahara and the Mediterranean have decided who makes it to us in Europe. Our right to asylum today is indeed a right of the strongest.
- Effectively protect the EU's external borders. To prevent smugglers and smugglers from deciding on entry into the EU, Europe's external border protection must be further improved. We insist that effective protection of the EU's external borders should also include more structural and technical border protection. Through functioning external border protection, we want to make internal border controls superfluous in the future.
- More staff, more powers for Frontex. Frontex must become a real border police and coast guard with sovereign powers and significantly increased personnel. Step by step, Frontex should be assigned its own border sections and protect them on its own responsibility. Our goal is to protect Europe's common external borders at European level.

Yes to a well-defended democracy

Our plan:

Consistently fight enemies of our state.

Never again is now – no place for anti-Semitism.

Zero tolerance in the fight against organized crime.

We act.

Consistently fighting enemies of our state

We are countering the increasing extremist threats with a 360-degree view. They lurk not only on the street, but increasingly also on the Internet. We need vigilance against all forms of extremism, violence and terror – whether it is right-wing or left-wing extremism or Islamism.

- Clear edge against terror supporters. We are immediately presenting a law to combat extremism. Anyone who advertises the goals and actions of a terrorist organization will be liable to prosecution in the future. Among other things, the law provides: mandatory expulsion, the refusal of a residence permit and, in the case of dual nationals, the loss of German citizenship. This applies in the case of a public call for the abolition of the free democratic basic order, for example by calling for an Islamist theocracy or sentencing people to commit an anti-Semitic crime.
- Stop sign for Islamism. Islamist terrorism and political Islam are underestimated dangers. We are taking a closer look at the ideological breeding ground of this religiously motivated political extremism. We do not tolerate any places of retreat and close mosques where hatred and anti-Semitism are preached. We are expanding basic research at universities in the field of violent and non-violent Islamism and dovetailing it with the actions of our security agencies. We are reinstating the expert group "Political Islam".
- Clear rules in cooperation with Muslim actors. We exclude clubs and associations that or their members are observed by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution from state cooperation and funding. All institutions that want to receive money from the state must commit themselves to the free democratic basic order and issue a declaration against anti-Semitism. In the future, we will locate the federal programme "Live Democracy" in the Federal Ministry of the Interior.
- Show right-wing extremism the red card. Right-wing extremists, citizens of the Reich and so-called self-administrators delegitimize our state and its institutions. Open violence and xenophobia make them particularly dangerous. We are fighting them with full force on the basis of our package of measures against right-wing extremism launched in 2020.
- Counter left-wing extremism just as consistently. Anyone who questions the state's monopoly on the use of force or openly calls for violence against the state, its institutions and its representatives should not expect leniency. The same applies to those who do not respect the property of third parties or attack critical infrastructure.
- Consistently apply gun law to extremists and criminals. The enemies of our state must be disarmed. At the same time, we ensure that legal gun owners, hunters, collectors and shooters are not harassed or criminalised.
- Don't expose public space to hate. Offences such as the display of anti-constitutional symbols as well as anti-constitutional and anti-Semitic statements must be prosecuted and punished with the full consistency of the rule of law.

Never again is now – no place for anti-Semitism

We resolutely fight Jew-hatred. Jews must be able to live in Germany more safely and without fear.

- More commitment against anti-Semitism. We expect political parties, academia, media, art and culture to make it clear that there is no room for anti-Semitic views in their ranks.
- Strengthen responsibility and dialogue. All pupils should visit memorials. This is important for their historical awareness. At the same time, we are rapidly pushing ahead with the development of the German-Israeli Youth Office. In this way, an up-to-date, real picture of Israel can be conveyed.
- No state money for anti-Semitism. In the future, civil society organisations funded by the federal government are to make a commitment to the free democratic basic order and Israel's right to exist, as well as against anti-Semitism as defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).
- Punish hatred of Israel and anti-Semitism more severely. Israel's right to exist is Germany's *raison d'être*. That is why we are tightening the incitement to hatred paragraph in the Criminal Code in such a way that denying the right to exist will be punishable in the future. In addition, we are introducing a particularly serious case of incitement to hatred, which includes perpetrators who act in an anti-Semitic manner.
- Fight immigrant anti-Semitism. We are changing the right of residence and asylum in such a way that an anti-Semitic crime also leads to a loss of humanitarian protection in Germany and deportation. We are making the commitment to Israel's right to exist a prerequisite for naturalization.

Zero tolerance in the fight against organized crime

We do not tolerate lawless areas and fight against organized crime, gang and clan crime. They represent a fundamental disregard for our legal and value system. We counter them with maximum control and persecution pressure. We declare war on isolation into criminal parallel societies with their own rules and their own jurisdiction. We also start where it hurts the criminals the most: money.

- Create a real customs police. We are bundling the dispersed police investigation services in the field of financial crime and equipping them with comprehensive expertise. In this way, we are making the new customs police a sharp sword in the fight against money laundering and financial crime.
- Fight money laundering and skim off the profits of crime. We are combating money laundering even more resolutely and are constitutionally regulating that in future a complete reversal of the burden of proof will apply to the confiscation of assets of unclear origin.
- Always keep an eye on clan crime. We are strengthening the "Federal-State Initiative to Combat Clan Crime".

- Create a genuine European Security Union. We are pushing for the states of Europe to move even closer together in the field of internal security. We are strengthening Europol's cooperation with the police forces of the Member States. Europol must be further developed and equipped in such a way that it becomes a central office for Europe and provides a common data and information house for the national security authorities – in the fight against organised crime, especially drug and smuggling crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

Yes to our responsibility in the world

Our plan:

For European peace in freedom and security.

Strengthen geopolitical capacity to act.

Germany as a reliable partner in the world.

Expand presence in the Indo-Pacific, accept systemic competition with China.

Our commitment to the world.

We act.

For European peace in freedom and security

For Germany and Europe, peace and security cannot be taken for granted. The Russian war of aggression has severely shaken the European security architecture. Vladimir Putin's regime despises democracy, human rights, international law and the rules of international coexistence. His goal is a new world order according to his rules. Security for Germany and Europe, in peace and freedom: this is of paramount importance to us. A decisive and united stance together with our partners is crucial for this.

- Ukraine is also defending us. Because if Ukraine falls, there is a threat of an attack on another European country. That is why we are supporting Ukraine with all the necessary diploma, financial and humanitarian resources, as well as arms deliveries. She must be able to exercise her right to self-defense.
- Contact Group Ukraine. Together with France, Poland and the United Kingdom, we want to develop a common strategy in close coordination with the United States to support Ukraine in its quest for peace, freedom and security. This also includes the question of credible security guarantees for Ukraine and, in this context, the question of NATO's role. Our goal is a peace process that can be led by Ukraine from a position of strength and on an equal footing.
- We are expanding the sanctions against Russia in a targeted and close-knit manner. The high economic price of this war of aggression is intended to lead Putin to rethink and then to an end to hostilities.

- Show Ukraine a perspective. Their accession to the EU is in the security and geopolitical interest of Germany and Europe. All criteria must be met in full before joining.

Strengthening geopolitical capacity for action

Everywhere things are seething, crises are increasing and do not stop at national borders. The situation in the world is serious – and we are challenged. As an economic heavyweight that has been able to reap a peace dividend for decades, Germany must take on more responsibility out of its own interest – for itself and for its allies, for peace and freedom, security and prosperity. At home, in Europe and in the free world.

- We are developing the Federal Security Council into a National Security Council. The National Security Council in the Federal Chancellery is to coordinate the key issues of foreign, security, defence, trade, European and development policy, to develop strategies and strategic foresight, and to be the body for joint political decision-making in crisis situations. To do this, we also have to reposition ourselves strategically.
- Adopt a new National Security Strategy. In our first year in office, we are conducting a thorough review of the flawed National Security Strategy. It must describe the new threat situation in concrete terms, define our interests in a targeted manner and draw operational conclusions for foreign, security, defence, European and development policy.
- Improve European coordination. The EU is strong when it acts as one and finds common positions on important decisions. To this end, the Federal Chancellery will take on a stronger coordinating role in the future. In the Councils of the European Union, there must no longer be abstentions on key policy areas.

Germany as a reliable partner in the world

The United States was, is and will remain Germany's most important ally outside Europe. Our peoples are united by a long friendship. Our countries share common values, interests and, as NATO members, a common promise of protection. We meet global powers on an equal footing and with an interest in partnership, without deviating from our values.

- Deepen the transatlantic partnership. We do not want to renounce the transatlantic partnership with the United States, but rather to deepen it further and stand together for security, freedom and peace in the world. In order to coordinate ourselves even better, we want to launch a high-level strategic dialogue.
- Friendship with France and Poland is of paramount importance. In the Weimar Triangle format, we seek close coordination between Berlin, Paris and Warsaw on all relevant issues of foreign, security and European policy. In addition, we want to cooperate more closely with both

countries in all areas that benefit citizens, such as energy, transport and stopping illegal migration.

- Our friendship with Israel is unshakable. With its history, Germany bears a special responsibility for the existence and security of Israel. Israel's security is and remains part of Germany's *raison d'être*. Out of this conviction, we naturally support Israel's right to self-defense against the terror that threatens Israel from various sides. It is in our interest to stand firmly by the side of the only democracy in the Middle East. To this end, we also want to support Israel militarily and end existing export blockades.
- The goal must be a sustainable peace in the Middle East. That is why we support a two-state solution that enables Israelis and Palestinians to live together peacefully. At the same time, we are committed to expanding the Abraham Accords, which are groundbreaking for rapprochement between Israel and a growing group of Arab states.
- Close and trusting strategic neighbourhood with Africa. Many African states have made progress in terms of economics, the rule of law and civil society. At the same time, we are aware of the challenges: migration, security and poverty. We see Africa as a continent of opportunity that we support out of our own interest. The aim is to enable states to fight terrorism themselves and ensure their own security – including in the African Union alliance.

Expanding presence in the Indo-Pacific, embracing system competition with China

China is positioning itself increasingly sharply against the liberal democracies and is acting increasingly expansively in its neighbourhood and far beyond. It works on a global scale to create economic, financial and political dependencies.

- Facing China with confidence. Together with our partners, we want to push back China's influence wherever our strategic interests are affected. We are committed to an independent European China policy that is closely coordinated with the United States.
- More engagement in the region. We are deepening our relationships with regional cooperation and value partners such as Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. In coordination with our regional partners, we are strengthening our economic and diplomatic presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Our commitment to the world

For us, human rights are universal, indivisible and inalienable. Our Christian view of humanity demands that we help the poorest and weakest in the world. This is one of the reasons why we resolutely oppose all attempts to uproot human rights and silence human rights defenders. We continue to strongly advocate for the rights of persecuted and oppressed Christians. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right and must be protected with all our might. Autocratic states are trying to push back democracy and freedom worldwide – we are also exposed to these hybrid threats. Together in Europe and with our partners and allies, we are resolutely defending

ourselves against this aspiration. In connection with this, humanitarian aid must also be provided reliably, in a targeted manner and with foresight.

- Formulate clear expectations. We link our development policy to strengthening the rule of law, expanding economic cooperation, effectively stopping illegal migration, combating terrorism and reducing the geopolitical influence of Russia and China. In doing so, we also want to take a European approach and promote private investment.
- Strengthen humanitarian aid. We are reuniting humanitarian aid and development cooperation in view of the marked overlap in content and for reasons of efficiency.
- Focus on women and girls. We stand up for their right to self-determination and family planning. Disadvantages and discrimination are poison for social and economic development.
- Finally make significant progress in the EU integration of the Western Balkans. Your EU membership is in our economic, security and geostrategic interest. We will continue to provide positive support for the accession efforts. This requires a renewed political effort, including through a continuation of the Berlin Process for better regional integration. Nevertheless, there will be no compromises in the accession criteria.
- Solidarity with the opposition to the Lukashenka regime. We are setting up a friendship group for Belarus to support the democracy movement with an action plan. We are committed to the free exercise of the right of self-determination of the Belarusian people.
- More realism and toughness in Iran policy. Iran is not only the greatest threat to the Jewish and democratic state of Israel, but one of the greatest threats to world peace. The nuclear agreement with Tehran has failed. We will increase the pressure by comprehensively closing the gaps in sanctions, providing targeted support to human rights defenders and, above all, women, and ending the dangerous influence of the Iraqi regime in Germany.
- Change of course in the Sahel. German and European Sahel policy has failed. Democratic governments have been replaced by Russian-backed military regimes. We therefore want to launch a new Sahel strategy with our European partners. In this way, we support the local people so that they do not have to make the dangerous journey to us in Europe.

Yes to a fully defensible Bundeswehr

Our plan:

Modern Bundeswehr at the cutting edge.

Taking on more responsibility in NATO.

Growing conscription – perspective of the social year, strong anchoring of the Bundeswehr in society.

For an efficient defence industry in Germany and Europe.

We act.

Modern Bundeswehr at the cutting edge

We have to be able to defend ourselves in order not to have to defend ourselves. That is why we are working for a Bundeswehr that is ready to defend itself and capable of fighting. It should be able to stand up to the threats of the 21st century and reliably protect our country. For this reason, we are strengthening the Bundeswehr and value our soldiers in particular. We are also implementing necessary reforms. Our goal is for the Federal Armed Forces to make a central contribution to NATO's deterrence and defence capability and to become a role model among our allies.

- Better position of the armed forces. We are restructuring the military and civilian structures of the Bundeswehr and focusing on the military purpose and benefits for fulfilling the core mission. The Bundeswehr needs an adequate infrastructure with modern barracks and training areas, airfields, naval bases, depot structures and administrative units.
- Implement defense holistically. Our security is comprehensively challenged, also in German. We want to fully fulfil our tasks within the framework of NATO obligations, especially with the expansion of homeland security.
- To form full equipment and material reserves for the troops. We are committed to full equipment. In addition, there is a need for broad reserves of everything that the Federal Armed Forces use for defence. This is the only way to ensure assertiveness and commitment.
- Create operational reserves, value reservists. The active troops must be able to rely on a strong reserve that can relieve and relieve them in the event of an emergency. To this end, the reserve must be structurally restructured and, as far as possible, trained and equipped in the same way as comparable active troop units. The reservists are also of particular importance as mediators for the troops in the middle of society. This role must be strengthened.
- Moving forward with future technologies. As the leading European army, the Bundeswehr must continue to lead the way in the areas of space, drone and European defence shields. To this end, we will massively build up our own cyber capabilities and further develop the national and supranational legal framework for effective use. We are building up a drone army, including the necessary production capacities. This also includes investments in drone research and the establishment of a drone defence system.

Taking on more responsibility in NATO

We stand by the transatlantic defence alliance without ifs and buts. It has guaranteed peace, freedom and security to the Federal Republic of Germany for more than 75 years. Now is the time to take on more responsibility. Our goal: Europe should increase its independent defence readiness in a transatlantic partnership and guarantee peace, freedom and security with NATO as a value-based defence alliance.

- Stand by NATO without ifs and buts. We are reliably and permanently complying with NATO's commitments to finance our defence. We see NATO's current two per cent target as the lower limit of our defence spending in order to enable a fully operational Bundeswehr with full personnel and material resources. We also stand by nuclear sharing. It is an indispensable element of deterrence and reassurance in the common alliance.
- Strengthen European defence. Together with other European armed forces, we want to integrate the Bundeswehr into a defence union that is embedded in NATO's structures. We want to involve the United Kingdom closely.
- Credible deterrent. We welcome the announcement by the USA that long-range weapons systems will be stationed in Germany. This deployment is the logical response to Russia's rearmament and makes a significant contribution to credible deterrence.

Growing conscription – perspective of the social year, strong anchoring of the Bundeswehr in society

Troop strength makes a decisive contribution to credible deterrence and to the fulfilment of NATO's capability targets. We want to increase it from 180,000 to 203,000 soldiers. For us, the Bundeswehr is an army of citizens in uniform. Our men and women in uniform perform an indispensable service for society as a whole. They deserve our highest recognition and full support. Their place is in the middle of society.

- Valuing soldiers. We want to anchor the Bundeswehr more firmly in public life, for example through more public pledges or as part of the annual Veterans' Day. We are paying greater tribute to outstanding military achievements. We are sticking to the model of youth officers, who fulfil an important educational mission in schools.
- Introduce conscription as you grow up. In the future, we are focusing on a mandatory social year, which we are thinking about together with the growing conscription. In this way, we meet the personnel requirements to strengthen our defence capability. From the circle of those who have been drafted, those who are fit to work are to be quoted and called up for basic military service who have secured their willingness to perform military service. Until a social year is implemented, we want to strengthen the voluntary services and the Federal Voluntary Service.

- Don't overload the army. The Bundeswehr should only make as many call-ups as required by the planning of the armed forces. As before the suspension of compulsory military service in 2011, it will again be possible to perform one's service, for example in a "blue light organisation". This model strengthens the resilience of our country in the context of overall defense.

For an efficient defence industry in Germany and Europe

Germany and Europe must put themselves in a position to produce the defence equipment necessary to protect the continent. An independent and efficient defence industry is of strategic importance for European sovereignty.

- More collaboration and more reliability. We are striving to build a European internal market for defence equipment with common export rules. This will make export policy more reliable for arms companies. We want to push ahead with cross-border cooperation between defence industries in Europe even more consistently and purposefully.
- Stable financing options. The European defence industry must be given better and more flexible access to finance. We are eliminating previous negative assessments and exclusion justifications for financing and sustainability issues as well as ESG criteria for our defense industries.
- Promote joint projects. We support cooperation between European research institutions in the field of defence. Existing instruments need to be aligned and used more efficiently. This applies to Permanent Structured Cooperation in the Field of Security and Defence (PESCO) and Coordinated Defence Planning for Europe (CARD), but also to the European Defence Fund (EDF).
- More speed in materials and equipment. We are restructuring procurement and streamlining processes noticeably. Today, the Bundeswehr's procurement office is too broadly positioned. We want to separate individual large-scale projects over the course of several years from the office and transfer them into a new, lean, powerful agency. We also need more planning security for budget funds.

Yes to a strong Europe

Our plan:

For a Europe that sets priorities.

Substantially strengthen the European Union's ability to act.

Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy.

We act.

For a Europe that sets priorities

The EU must concentrate on those tasks that can be fulfilled better at the European level than at the national level. Our goal is a Europe that is regionally rooted, supported by the nation state and legitimized by Europe.

- More Europe only where Europe creates added value for all. These include, above all, deepening the single market, strengthening competitiveness, completing both the Energy Union and the Capital Markets Union, a stable Economic and Monetary Union and an ambitious policy for research and innovation, climate protection, foreign trade, stopping illegal migration, digitalisation and defence. Dispensable tasks are to be eliminated.
- "Deal for competitiveness". Europe urgently needs a boost for greater economic performance. In doing so, we rely on market-based instruments, openness to technology and trust. Remaining barriers to the cross-border movement of goods and services must be removed as quickly as possible. We are committed to the competitiveness, innovative strength and development of all European regions.
- Action plan for less bureaucracy in Europe. We want an immediate stop to the burden on new and ongoing EU initiatives, an EU competitiveness check and an independent European Regulatory Control Council that measures the costs of bureaucracy and also takes into account the experience in the Member States with the application of EU law. We want to enforce a strong bureaucratic brake ("one in, two out") in Europe.
- Open up more opportunities. We want to make life easier for SMEs in particular when it comes to awarding contracts. That is why we want the European definition of small and medium-sized enterprises to be adapted. We are raising the thresholds for public contracts.

Substantially strengthening the European Union's ability to act

European policy has always been and always is first and foremost a policy for peace in freedom. We stand for a strong Europe, both internally and externally. This also includes a clear division of competences between the EU and its member states.

- Make the EU more capable of acting internally and externally. This requires reforms of institutions and their working methods.
- Consistently observe subsidiarity. We want to further develop the instrument of the subsidiarity complaint and at the same time simplify it.
- Defend the rule of law in Europe more effectively. There are already ways to identify and sanction serious violations of fundamental values by individual member states. This leeway must be applied more consistently by the EU Commission.

Reorienting enlargement and neighbourhood policy

We want to make the EU accession process realistic. For this reason, enlargement is to be geared more closely to the concrete achievements of the candidate countries – without compromising on the criteria. At the same time, we need a fresh start in our neighbourhood policy.

- Support countries on their path to the EU. The accession of the countries of the Western Balkan, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova is in our security and geopolitical interest. That is why we are proposing intermediate stages for candidate countries that do not yet meet all the accession requirements but are courageously implementing the reforms towards membership.
- Deepen dialogue with neighbouring countries. To this end, we are using the potential of the European Political Community. However, we reject double structures with the EU.
- Deepen cooperation with the United Kingdom. It is in each other's interest to work closely and trustingly together, especially in security and defence policy.
- Political and economic relations with Turkey. Turkey remains of strategic importance and an important partner for Europe. We regret that it is currently moving away from the EU's system of values and therefore cannot join it.
- Strengthen partnerships and cooperation with neighbouring countries. This applies in particular to the countries of the European Economic Area Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as well as to our neighbour Switzerland.
- Working together for mutual benefit. We are expanding our partnership relations in the Middle East and North Africa. We focus on preventing illegal migration.

IV. Our plan for a country that sticks together again

There is a lot to do for our land of opportunities: for our families, for our rich club life, for a wide-ranging cultural and educational landscape including dual training, excellent universities and research institutions. Together, everything is possible. They all need to be strengthened. It is also clear that our state needs to step up a gear.

A functioning state is only possible with cohesion. But the reverse is also true: cohesion can only be achieved with a state that works. To do this, our country needs a change of policy now.

We want a country that sticks together again.

We want to bring Germany forward again.

A Germany of which we can be proud again.

Yes to Leitkultur and cohesion

Our plan:

Connecting people.

Living freedom and promoting culture.

Promote sport and exercise.

Ensuring the participation of people with disabilities.

We act.

Connecting people

Our country is worth living in. Our country is a new home for many people. Our country thrives on the fact that we understand each other, meet each other and stand up for each other. We see each individual – and at the same time know that a diverse society like ours cannot function without liabilities.

- Giving order to diversity. We must define and enforce the values of our country. We need a dominant culture.
- Commitment to our values. Those who choose our country also choose its values and our liberal democracy. We demand a clear commitment to freedom, equality, democracy and the rule of law. We demand an unequivocal commitment to Israel and its right to exist. This also includes the rejection of anti-Semitism in any form.

- Promote and demand integration. In recent years, many people have come to us from cultures that differ from Western culture: in their values, their understanding of the state and religion and their everyday culture. Therefore, integration must continue to be promoted, but demanded more intensively than before.
- Agree on concrete integration steps. With mandatory integration agreements, we show recognised beneficiaries of protection steps towards successful integration, set them milestones and monitor that they are working towards them. We are creating a non-profit integrative service for this group to introduce those who cannot find employment to the labour market.
- Create better starting opportunities. Learning the German language lays the foundation for integration and participation. A wide range of German and integration courses enables success in education and work.
- Integration is not a hasty action. Naturalisation always stands at the end of successful integration. That is why we reject the express naturalization of the traffic light after only three years of residence just as resolutely as the general possibility of dual citizenship. We reverse them. For us, a good knowledge of German, permanent integration into the labour market and impunity are indispensable prerequisites for naturalisation.
- Learning and living cohesion. Service to the common good brings together people from different backgrounds, religions and generations. It offers the opportunity to think outside the box and contributes to personality development. In the future, we are focusing on a mandatory social year, which we are thinking about together with the growing conscription.
- Strengthen voluntary commitment. We are implementing an association package for our volunteer work, with which we tackle bureaucracy, data protection and liability issues. In addition, we are providing more incentives for private funds and donations and facilitating access to public funding.
- Relieve the tax burden on volunteering. We are noticeably increasing the volunteer and trainer bonuses.
- Placing more trust in clubs. The notarization of applications for amendments to the articles of association or change of board of directors is to be omitted. We make it easier to obtain permits and requirements for public events.
- Adapt data protection to practice. We are changing the data protection requirements for non-profit associations. They should no longer have to appoint a data protection officer.
- More courage and speed in the reform of public broadcasting (ÖRR). More than ever, our country needs an independent media landscape. This applies to the private media, but also to the ÖRR. There needs to be an information offer that is not overwhelming, instructed or patronised, tendentious or one-sided. We oblige the ÖRR to its core mission: thriftiness, more diversity of opinion and neutrality.
- Dual media system preserved. Private media need advertising revenue. That's why we make sure that the competitive environment in which they work is fair.

- German without package inserts and paternalism. We stand by gender-neutral language. However, we reject gender coercion for ideological reasons because it erects barriers, excludes people and wants to patronise them. We are committed to ensuring that gender language is dispensed with in public spaces – at schools and universities, in broadcasting and administration.

Living freedom and promoting culture

Our country is rich in culture – rich in traditions and customs, in art and architecture, in literature and music, in history and religious diversity. This wealth distinguishes us – in town and country. Our culture is the foundation of our freedom, on which we as a nation stand today and want to continue to stand in the future. We will cultivate and develop the cultural wealth of our country and defend it against every challenge.

- Making traditions come alive. Cultural traditions are part of our dominant culture. Places of culture such as museums, theatres, concert halls, religious institutions, libraries, archives or memorials preserve our traditions and customs and help to bring them to life. It must be preserved and strengthened.
- Promotion of art and culture. It is a public task that the federal government, the federal states and the municipalities must jointly guarantee, even in economically difficult times. We will be committed to fulfilling the federal government's special cultural responsibility, especially for foreign cultural policy, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, and the promotion of outstanding institutions and projects through the Federal Cultural Foundation, especially but not only in the capital.
- Preserve and strengthen cultural federalism. A functioning and vibrant cultural infrastructure is part of the public service. Museums, theatres, libraries and galleries also belong in rural areas. They are a prerequisite for equal living conditions.
- Consolidating and expanding the culture of remembrance. For us, the memory of the two totalitarian regimes in Germany is a mission for the present and the future. At the same time, we are expanding the approach of remembrance to include the history of colonialism.
- Continue to come to terms with the SED dictatorship. To this end, we want to continue to promote science and research in the coming years. In addition, we eliminate pension discrimination for emigrants from the GDR and those persecuted by the SED regime.
- Thinking future technologies and culture together. New technologies such as artificial intelligence will also be an economic factor in culture. We are committed to ensuring that the potential is exploited.
- Rewarding personal initiative and efficiency. The innovative strength of our society lies in culture. It is also an economic factor for our country. We support the willingness of cultural institutions to take responsibility for themselves. Cultural sponsorship, patronage and economic cooperation must be a natural part of the management of modern cultural institutions.

- Recognize clubs as cultural venues. Clubs are places of cultural exchange. In the Building Use Ordinance, clubs should be recognised as places of culture in order to underline their social importance.
- Strengthen creative industries. In doing so, we pay particular attention to supporting the music industry as well as promoting cinema, film and games.
- Preserve Christian traditions. Germany is deeply influenced by the Christian faith in terms of history, culture and values. The churches make an indispensable contribution to education, the common good and social cohesion. We are committed to the protection of Christian holidays and Sunday rest as well as to regulated cooperation between state and church. Religious education is indispensable. We are in favor of upgrading religion as a proper school subject.
- Protect the freedom of churches and religious communities. We appreciate it when religion contributes to social cohesion and provides orientation. The comprehensive protection of religious freedom and the protection of religious and ideological minorities is of particular concern to us. Our Basic Law guarantees freedom of religion. However, it is not a carte blanche to spread ideologies that are directed against other religions and our liberal legal system. Freedom of religion is and will continue to be the decisive acid test for liberal democracy, the rule of law, freedom of expression and conscience as well as all other universal human rights.
- Protect and value Jewish life. Since the terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023, a hatred of Jews that has long been unimaginable has broken through in our country. Germany has a special responsibility to take action against this. We will update the National Strategy against Anti-Semitism and for Jewish Life and implement concrete measures. Because we are grateful that there is a lively Jewish life in our country again today.
- Strengthen Muslims in our midst. We do not tolerate any devaluation of Muslims. Our goal is a lively and diverse Muslim community life that feels a sense of belonging to Germany and stands firmly on the ground of our free basic order. As part of a foundation, we support mosque communities that meet these requirements and the training of imams in Germany and in German. This makes integration easier.
- No remote-controlled Islam. There must be no influence by foreign governments on German Muslims through mosque associations and Islamic associations under the guise of religious freedom. That is why we are introducing an obligation to disclose funding and donors. In general, clubs and associations that receive money from foreign governments and organizations affiliated with them can neither receive state money from Germany nor enter into cooperation with our state agencies.
- Promote cultural education across generations. Cultural education takes place at home and at school, but should also become an integral part of the offer of all cultural institutions so that culture will continue to have an audience in the future.

- Cultivate the cultural heritage of displaced persons and resettlers. It is a natural and valuable part of our identity. The German cultural heritage in Eastern Europe unfolds a unifying force in many places. Together with the expellees and their associations, we are anchoring it as an integral part of German culture and part of European identity.
- Strengthen the memory of flight and expulsion. We are strengthening federal funding in accordance with the cultural paragraph of the Federal Expellees Act. We are reversing the renaming of the previous "Federal Institute for the Culture and History of Germans in Eastern Europe" and transferring the Federal Agency to Berlin for its core mission of advising and supporting the Federal Government in accordance with Section 96 of the Federal Constitutional Court Act. We are making the independent Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation independent and are pushing ahead with a redesign of the permanent exhibition.
- Honoring expellees and resettlers. In our historical responsibility, we stand up for the relatives of displaced persons, resettlers, ethnic German resettlers and German minorities. Their development work and bridging function are constitutive of our nation's self-image.
- Everything under one roof. We are reuniting the responsibilities for displaced persons, ethnic German resettlers and ethnic German resettlers as well as German minorities in the Federal Ministry of the Interior and strengthening the office of the Commissioner for Ethnic German Repatriate Issues and National Minorities. We continue to support the Cultural Foundation of German Expellees.
- Keep the door open for ethnic German resettlers to Germany. We strengthen them in their self-identification as Germans. We continue to stand up for the legally guaranteed admission of German ethnic German resettlers and align the legal requirements even more closely with the reality of life of the people in the areas of origin. We make it possible for relatives born after 1 January 1993 to move in.
- Reform the Foreign Pensions Act. We are eliminating the problem of disadvantages under pension law and poverty in old age caused by others among ethnic German resettlers and ethnic German resettlers.
- Culture as a bridge in Europe and the world. The European Union is founded on a common culture. Culture builds bridges, this is also a lesson of German history. We will therefore continue to support international cooperation for the promotion of culture.

Promoting sport and exercise

Germany is a sports-loving country and a great sporting nation of international importance. Sport and exercise connect people, convey values, support integration and inclusion, and strengthen health. Sport and disabled sports are valuable – for each individual and for social interaction. That is why we support sports development in all areas. Mass and top-class sport are equally important to us.

- Giving sport a strong voice. We are reorganizing the political structures of sport, locating sports policy in the Federal Chancellery and appointing a State Minister for Sport and Volunteering. For the coming legislative period, we will ensure that the sports billion is available.
- Promote movement and togetherness, strengthen thoughts of performance. We are committed to half an hour of sport a day for our primary school children. National Youth Games with a competitive character throughout Germany are a concern of ours, which we are strengthening through the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs.
- Be able to swim safely. At the end of primary school, every child should be able to swim. Together with the federal states, we are setting up a nationwide campaign to learn to swim.
- For the best of the best. We are sharpening the mechanisms for talent recognition and enabling targeted top-level sports promotion. Only with the best training conditions, the best support, also with regard to physical and mental health, can we achieve a trend change towards more medals at major events.
- Coach offensive. We are improving the conditions for coaches in order to further advance Germany as a sports location.
- Expand dual careers in sports. In addition to the Bundeswehr, police and customs as important pillars in top-class sport, we will also support municipalities and companies in the future.
- Olympic and Paralympic Games in Germany. Sport inspires people, sporting successes motivate us as a society. With major sporting events, Germany demonstrates its ability to organize. We support a bid for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Sport must be clean and safe. We strengthen the supervisory bodies for the fight against doping and fight resolutely against corruption and manipulation. Sexualised violence has no place in sport. Sports clubs must be safe places for children and young people.
- Promote a broad e-sports landscape. E-sports is so established in Germany that we now recognize the non-profit status.

Ensuring the participation of people with disabilities

People with and without disabilities live together and on an equal footing. They learn and work together. But we are not there yet. That is why we are continuing to strengthen the independence, personal responsibility and participation of people with disabilities. We see an inclusive social space and accessibility as added value for all generations. Digitization opens up new opportunities for participation and inclusion.

- Offer more opportunities. We make it easier for people with disabilities to access training and work with tailor-made impulses for an inclusive labour market. To this end, we are strengthening both placement on the primary labour market and inclusion companies and workshops. This is because they offer a protected space to try out working life.

- Services from a single source. Our goal is to introduce integrated performance planning. For the citizen, it should no longer matter how many social welfare agencies are responsible for him.
- Making the health system more inclusive. We are committed to further improvements in barrier-free access to health care and information. We are continuing the action plan for a diverse, inclusive and accessible health system. We will simplify time-consuming application processes for aids, especially for children with disabilities.
- More mindfulness in public spaces. Barriers in buses and trains must be removed more quickly. The same applies to hurdles in everyday life such as arbitrarily parked rental bikes and scooters, which are a risk of accidents, especially for blind and visually impaired people.
- Maintain educational diversity. We promote sign language as a minority language. We provide individual educational opportunities for pupils with disabilities and, in addition to inclusion offers, we also see special schools as part of the educational world.

Yes to family and responsibility

Our plan:

Supporting families.

Strengthening parental rights – ensuring child and youth protection.

We act.

Supporting families

Families are real achievers. They take responsibility for generations and give our country stability. At the same time, family always means living with challenges, from limited time to tight budgets. Our claim is: We give families enough leeway to be able to shape their lives independently.

- We stand by the model of marriage and family. Marriage as a legally binding and long-term union of two people is under the special protection of the Basic Law. We are sticking to that.
- Respect different lifestyles. For us, responsibility and diversity belong together. Not only in traditional families, but also in patchwork and separation families, as well as among single parents and in same-sex relationships, values that are fundamental to our society are lived.
- To a good partnership. We are committed to parental leave and parental allowance. They have proven to be a family-political achievement and meet the desire of many families to share tasks. We are improving parental allowance. We are continuing to develop the partnership bonus with both parents working part-time full-time at the same time.

- More parent and family education. We are expanding counselling services and early help for families. To this end, we are strengthening the Early Aid Fund and advocating for better networking of existing structures. In this way, we make it easier for families who are dependent on support to access family midwives or voluntary family sponsorships.
- Create an overview of family benefits. We want an overarching digital portal for all family benefits so that families can receive the benefits to which they are entitled easily and unbureaucratically. The possibilities for exchanging data must also be improved.
- Relieve families financially. Our goal is to develop the child allowance in the direction of the basic allowance for parents. Accordingly, we are also raising child benefit, which will be paid automatically after the birth in the future. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that child benefit for children living in other EU countries can be adapted to the maintenance costs of the respective country. In addition, we bundle family benefits and make them more accessible.
- Spouse splitting. Spouses who earn differently must not be disadvantaged. That is why we are sticking to spousal splitting and want to take greater account of children in the future.
- For good care that families can also rely on. That's why we want the infrastructure to be expanded, the quality to be increased and the childcare situation to be improved. We strengthen daycare centers in their role as educational institutions. We are also improving the tax deductibility of childcare costs.
- Provide financial support for single parents. They are particularly at risk of poverty, even if they work. That is why we are increasing the tax relief amount.
- Support families in integration. For families with an immigrant background, we are continuing proven programmes. These include special integration courses and support for mothers with an immigrant background to pave the way for their entry into the labour market.
- Empowering young people. We are developing child and youth welfare in such a way that it offers them the best possible support. In doing so, we rely on structures that guarantee safety and reliability. We are expanding psychosocial support services.
- Senior citizen policy as a cross-sectional task: No to age discrimination! We want a Germany in which all generations live together on an equal footing and with respect. We are therefore launching a comprehensive package to combat age discrimination. This includes information and education measures, the promotion of age-friendly working models and clear regulations to counter discrimination in everyday working life. Digital services must also be manageable for senior citizens.
- Fight loneliness. This is becoming even more important in an ageing society. We continue to support the good work of existing networks: neighbourhood help, voluntary work, counselling centres and telephone counselling. At the same time, the aim must be to provide the most

coordinated support possible from health services, social institutions and educational institutions.

Strengthening parental rights – ensuring the protection of children and young people

Family is not always an ideal world. That's why family policy for us also means: We don't leave anyone alone with worries and problems. It is precisely when it comes down to it that our state must take responsibility. The best interests of the child are our top priority.

- Section 218 remains. The current legal situation on abortion represents a hard-won social compromise that takes into account the woman's right to self-determination and the protection of the unborn child. We stand by this legal situation.
- Protect the best interests of the child, strengthen parental rights. For reasons of the child's best interests, we will exclude the custody and access rights of the violent parent in the event of intimate partner violence. Rights of the biological father may not be undermined by an agreement between the mother and third parties.
- No residence due to false paternity. They are a fraud on the community and on the child. We make the abusive acknowledgment of paternity a punishable offence.
- Protection of children and young people instead of arbitrary identity politics. The self-determination law of the traffic light allows children and adolescents to change their gender entry and first name even without an expert opinion or advice and court decision. We firmly reject this. Especially in the age-related volatile phase of puberty, it must be ruled out that personality doubts are met with a frivolous gender change. In any case, independent psychological assessments are needed. We generally reject surgical interventions before the age of majority.
- No frivolous sex change in adults. The change of gender entry must not be given up to arbitrariness. It is also true that every gender reassignment surgery must be preceded by a detailed independent second consultation.

Yes to advancement through education

Our plan:

Ensuring good education from the very beginning.

Strengthening schools as a place of learning.

We act.

Ensuring good education from the very beginning

Learning begins on the day of birth. Never again does a person learn as quickly as in the first few years. In the family, in the daycare center and in the kindergarten, not only are the foundations for a successful life created, but it is also decisive what our country will look like tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. Our goal: to give children the chance to get the best out of themselves, regardless of their origin and budget. This is a fundamental imperative of equal opportunities – and a key to new success for our country. To do this, they need a functioning, reliable education and care system. We need second opportunities for young people without a first educational qualification and strong further training in the face of technological upheavals and digitalisation. We want to significantly improve the form and content of cooperation between the federal and state governments without calling into question the clearly defined responsibilities.

- Correctly identify support needs. We are placing greater emphasis on educational research in order to create uniform standards for the comprehensive diagnosis of the developmental status of all three- to four-year-olds. In the future, education, family and social policy must go hand in hand for the benefit of all children. To this end, the federal, state and local governments must work more closely together.
- Strive for school readiness for all children. We are focusing on minimum standards and are supporting the states and municipalities in expanding the number of childcare places with a further investment programme.
- Fix language problems early. Every child who starts school must be able to speak German. We want to oblige all children with special needs to participate in a pre-school programme in a day-care centre, kindergarten or pre-school. In addition, we are initiating a restart of the successful federal language daycare centre programme.
- Clearly structure cooperation. We are creating the legal prerequisites for an improved cooperation structure for schools, youth welfare and integration assistance.

Strengthening schools as a place of learning

Education is the great promise of advancement that our country gives to every young generation: the vast majority succeed, but far too many still don't. Tens of thousands of school dropouts per year are an indictment of our country – and a threat to prosperity and cohesion. We need to support children and young people more and demand more. School is compulsory. Graduation too.

- Educational federalism at the cutting edge. It must not be the case that the place of residence is decisive for the quality of education. We rely on meaningful and binding comparative studies and learning status surveys. Our goal is a high-level Abitur that is comparable in quality nationwide. There must be no levelling of requirements.
- Push ahead with the expansion of all-day schools. We are pushing ahead with the expansion of all-day educational opportunities for primary school children. Each child should be supported and challenged more individually. One thing is clear: reading, writing and arithmetic are the basis for any educational success.

- Secondary school today also means digital school. Where it makes sense, tablets, e-books and whiteboards are used. In addition to media education and computer science, schools must also promote critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration.
- DigitalPakt Schule 2.0. In doing so, we are focusing on digital infrastructure, digital teaching and learning programmes and research-based qualification of teachers and school administrators. Data protection must also be pragmatic here.
- Promoting the innovative spirit of young people. Skills in mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and technology (STEM) are central to mastering the challenges of the future. We are expanding the "Jugend forscht" talent competition, which has been successful for decades.
- Evidence-based education policy requires data. We therefore call on the federal and state governments to create a nationwide register of educational progress across all levels of formal education and to provide for regular access to this data for research. As a first step, a state-wide data protection-compliant identification number for all pupils (pupil ID / statistics ID) is to be introduced.
- Take a critical look at social media use. The early use of social media has an impact on the health as well as the learning and performance of children and adolescents, including at school. We will evaluate these as quickly as possible on a scientifically based basis and present a package of measures to strengthen health and youth media protection.

Yes to high-performance vocational and academic education

Our plan:

Strengthening vocational and academic education in a targeted manner.

Going into the future with excellence.

Promoting all talents in Germany in the best possible way.

We act.

Targeted strengthening of vocational and academic education

Vocational and academic education are of equal value to us. Vocational school students, trainees and students are the future of our country. Both educational paths offer highly attractive life prospects for young people. We promote the strengths of people in both educational paths.

- Further promote dual training. We support the development of vocational schools. In alliance with employers, employees and chambers, we are making vocational education and training fit for the future. We will continue the Alliance for Training and Continuing Education.

- Promote career orientation. We want to reduce the number of young people who do not go to school, complete an apprenticeship or work. A structured, individual process of career orientation in all types of schools is crucial for this. Together with the stakeholders who are involved in career orientation nationwide and regionally, we want to coordinate all existing measures.
- Regulate the equivalence of vocational and academic education in a binding manner. The Federal Government and the Länder are legally anchoring the German Qualifications Framework in an Interstate Treaty.
- Recognizing changes in the job profile. The skills required in a profession are changing. That is why we regularly review and adapt the training regulations. We are driving forward the digitalization of continuing education and work processes.
- Giving up is not an option. Innovative concepts for school leavers, university dropouts and doubters, such as the Voluntary Crafts Year, need to get around more. Low-skilled workers find it easier to obtain a vocational qualification step by step. That is why we will strengthen partial and further qualifications and introduce them in other professions.
- Dismantle barriers. We also open up access to the higher civil service of the federal government to Bachelor's graduates with a doctorate or several years of professional experience. In this way, we ensure the performance of the public service and strengthen the equality between academic and vocational education.

Moving into the future with excellence

We see it as our responsibility to make the science system fit for the future, whether at universities or non-university research institutions. This requires efficient structures and stable financing. We focus on freedom, efficiency and personal responsibility, competition, cooperation models – and less bureaucracy. We must also understand research policy strategically.

- Excellence package instead of average. We support top performance, profile building and cooperation in the science system. Excellence comes from competition. In this way, we are further developing the Excellence Strategy. We are reducing the bureaucratic effort involved in competition procedures to an absolute minimum.
- Develop personnel in science. It is in our own interest that science remains an attractive employer. High-performance science needs high-performing young scientists. We are focusing on young, highly talented scientists. That is why we are specifically strengthening the mid-level construction at universities.
- Strengthen German-Israeli research cooperation. We are committed to ensuring that Israel, as one of the world's leading research locations, is even more closely involved in the EU's research activities than before. We want to learn more from Israel through more intensive forms of cooperation.

- Develop a competence network for contemporary Jewish research. We are expanding our knowledge of Jewish life in Germany and worldwide. We bundle and strengthen the existing expertise on contemporary Jewish research.
- Promote excellent research in Europe and worldwide. We are expanding the Weimar Triangle to include a science platform. We are strategically expanding research collaborations with the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and Israel on key technologies in order to make Europe more competitive.
- Strengthen strategic security research. Strategic security research is of existential importance for Germany. We want to pool existing expertise, network stakeholders with each other and provide targeted support. To this end, we will develop a competence network for strategic security research and lift the resulting restrictions on military research. We must also counter China in particular with more competence. That is why we are building a network for independent Chinese studies.
- For more practical orientation. We want to leverage the enormous innovation potential of students and scientists at universities of applied sciences. To this end, we are further developing the "Research at Universities of Applied Sciences (HAW)" programme.
- Give more freedom. We enable universities and non-university research institutions to rent out their equipment for a fee. We are removing obstacles in association law and adapting budget law through experimentation clauses.

Supporting all talents in Germany in the best possible way

Germany offers a home to an incredible number of people with special skills and skills. They perform at the highest level in vocational and academic education. We are committed to promoting all talents in our country in the best possible way. They should see their future here with us.

- For more talent in vocational education and training. We open the door to the organizations for the promotion of gifted students. In this way, professional talents also benefit from valuable offers such as stays abroad, networking opportunities and financial support.
- Anchor entrepreneurship in the promotion of gifted students. Top performers in vocational and academic education have the best chances of successful self-employment. We support them on their way.
- Increase scholarship rates. Scholarships are an important instrument for the promotion of gifted students. They must be expanded in type and scope and awarded as unbureaucratically as possible. Talents in vocational and academic education need freedom for top performance. A scholarship should be fully adequate in Germany.
- Attracting international talent to Germany. We strengthen the exchange of international scientists and promote study and research stays, especially in key technologies.

- Adapt upgrading BAföG to technological change. Germany needs skilled workers in the skilled trades in particular. The rapid pace of progress increases the frequency of necessary further training. We provide even more support for skilled workers in their training activities.
- Fair financing of quality education. We are better coordinating BAföG and the KfW student loan. BAföG must be adequate. We will ensure that BAföG applications can be submitted and processed more easily and completely digitally in the future and thus decided on more quickly. We are accelerating the enforcement of the law for BAföG abroad and anchoring it centrally in the federal administration.
- More earning opportunities. We offer BAföG recipients the opportunity to earn more.
- Provide planning security. Taking out a student loan must not be an incalculable risk. That is why we are committed to fair conditions and ensure a fixed interest rate.

Yes to good health and care

Our plan:

Better position the health system.

Making care future-proof.

We act.

Better positioning of the health system

The ageing of our society, the shortage of skilled workers in the healthcare sector, medical and technical progress and rising costs pose major challenges for our society. They also require structural adjustments in health and care. We are concerned with each individual, with services of general interest, personal responsibility and prevention. In doing so, we stand by the cornerstones of the German health care system with its proven self-administration, the duality of statutory and private health insurance, our commitment to the principle of freelancing and solidarity-based contribution financing. We are bringing about a change in mentality in health policy: working with each other and not against each other is the order of the day.

- High-quality care in the city and in the countryside. This must also be the basic idea of a hospital reform. The planning sovereignty of the states for hospitals remains unaffected. We are thinking of inpatient care with nationwide basic and regular care, especially in rural areas, as well as the necessary concentration of specialised services, together with outpatient general and specialist care as well as the services of the other health professions, which should take on more responsibility for care. The goal must be to prevent a cold structural change in the hospital landscape. We will correct mismanagement as a result of the hospital reform.

- Eliminate false incentives in the health care system. We are further developing emergency care and strengthening the work of the rescue services – closely interlinked with medical care and disaster control with the participation of the municipalities.
- Make the finances of the statutory health insurance future-proof. To this end, we are striving for greater efficiency in the use of contribution money and strengthening competition between health insurance companies.
- Strengthen care. We are innovatively developing family and paediatric practices. It is intended to take on a stronger control function for patients in order to contribute to better coordination of treatment processes and to reduce waiting times for doctors' appointments. At the same time, we must relieve all professional groups of bureaucracy. More time must be created for treatment. We are redesigning obstetrics and medical care for children and adolescents in a future-proof manner. Families must receive the best possible medical care where they live. We want to improve outpatient and inpatient care services for mental illnesses in line with needs, especially for children and adolescents.
- Focusing more on women's health. In some cases, there are still major differences between men and women in prevention, development, diagnosis, therapy and research into diseases. Although some progress has been made, we continue to see many gender inequalities to the detriment of women. We want to promote gender-specific medicine more strongly than before as an independent field of activity. This requires concepts and measures that better reach women in health education, promotion and care – supported by an overall differentiated and gender-equitable approach to research and care.
- Focus on prevention. We see great opportunities in the prevention of common common diseases. We want to improve prevention services in all areas of life and strengthen people's personal responsibility and health literacy.
- Simplify rehabilitation procedures. We are committed to a uniform application procedure. Medical and vocational rehabilitation must be better interlinked.
- Strengthen and maintain pharmacies. They are not only the first and low-threshold point of contact for many people with their health concerns. They also ensure the reliable and permanent supply of medicines to the population around the clock. With a pharmacy reform, we are strengthening brick-and-mortar pharmacies and giving them a future.
- Strong healthcare and pharmaceutical location. Germany was once the pharmacy of the world. It must therefore be our ambition to make the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry a real leading economy. To do this, we need regular dialogue with manufacturers, wholesalers and all other stakeholders. We will improve site and competitive conditions and facilitate the development of new products, for example through faster approval procedures.

- Reduce bottlenecks in medicines and medical devices, improve supply. To do this, we need to secure supply chains – including basic supplies – and improve the development of reserve antibiotics, vaccines and research into paediatric medicines and cancer therapies. The same applies to therapies for rare diseases in order to contribute to improving the quality of life.
- Advancing digitization in the health sector. It is the key to faster and safer care. We will continue to exploit the potential of electronic patient records, digital health applications and the use of AI in line with data protection. With comprehensive education, we want to promote the voluntary disclosure of personal health data for clinical trial purposes and thus the fight against diseases. We want to provide targeted support for digitization in medical practices and outpatient care.

Making care future-proof

Care must not be a risk of poverty – that is our claim. We are guided by solidarity and intergenerational justice. Social long-term care insurance in Germany is a successful model in social policy. Due to changed framework conditions, it needs an update 30 years after its introduction by the CDU/CSU. To do this, we need a comprehensive social dialogue on the central topic of care for the future and break new ground so that care for people in need of care remains reliable and affordable. We create good conditions for people in need of care, their relatives and those working in care. With a clear financing structure, we are creating the conditions to ensure good care for young and old in our state.

- Making retirement provision affordable and sustainable. When it comes to providing for long-term care, we rely on a financing mix consisting of statutory long-term care insurance, company co-financing, tax revenues and self-responsible preventive care. Affordable supplementary long-term care insurance can close the financing gap in long-term care. We are examining the better tax deductibility of such models as part of a sustainable pension plan. Our goal is to provide the best possible protection for care-related costs, especially for those who would otherwise have to make use of social assistance.
- Ensure financial stability of social long-term care insurance. In addition to rapid financial stabilisation, we are developing a comprehensive concept for stable care in an ageing society and implementing it as quickly as possible. This also involves using the funds of the social long-term care insurance in a more needs-based way in such a way that the financial burdens of those affected are cushioned in the best possible way.
- Strengthen relatives. We focus on the home care situation and want to strengthen the compatibility of care and work. We want to achieve more simplification with a care budget that can be used flexibly for nursing services. Through strong networks in the immediate vicinity and opportunities offered by digitalisation, we continue to enable a large number of people in need of care to live in their own four walls for as long as possible.

- Prevention and rehabilitation before care. For us, avoiding the need for care is not only a humanitarian imperative. With prevention and rehabilitation, we want to postpone the need for care for as long as possible. In this way, we relieve the system profoundly.
- Make nursing professions more attractive. Future-proof care needs people who work in a wide range of professions. To counteract the personnel shortage, we are focusing on attractive working conditions such as predictable deployment times and stand-in pools to cushion peak workloads, promotion opportunities, new job profiles and recruitments abroad. At the same time, we support the deployment and cooperation of multi-professional teams and specialists with different skill levels. We strengthen the role of nurses in health care and simplify documentation processes that take a lot of time.
- Thinking holistically about nursing. Inpatient and outpatient facilities are to be given more options for designing care. We want to break down rigid sector boundaries through new forms of housing and care in which caregivers and relatives take care of each other.
- Less bureaucracy, more time for human interaction. We are advancing digitalisation in nursing, striving for the close integration of medical services and home supervision in order to avoid duplicate structures, and are examining their merger. We are fighting excessive bureaucracy and want to create opening clauses and testing opportunities for flexible solutions and new models. Our goal is: More time for people and less time for administration.
- Protection and dignity of life. We are expanding the services of hospice and palliative care and want to enable a dignified farewell from life. We reject active euthanasia. To ensure effective protection of life, we are adopting a comprehensive suicide prevention law.

Yes to affordable construction, housing and sustainable mobility

Our plan:

Ensure affordable construction and housing.

Renew transport infrastructure, choose mobility freely.

We act.

Ensuring affordable construction and housing

It is the new social question of our time: Are construction and housing still affordable in our country – for people of all income groups? The housing situation is difficult, especially in metropolitan areas. Rents are too high for many people, and construction has become unaffordable. The only thing that helps to relax the market is more supply. We need more new houses and apartments, faster and cheaper. To this end, we are reducing construction costs through more building land and lower, sensible standards. We are ensuring less bureaucracy and

more digitalisation and realigning construction funding.

- Make building and housing affordable again. To this end, we are fundamentally streamlining building and regional planning law and reducing the regulations in a noticeable and responsible manner. With building type E – as in "Simple" – we are creating the conditions for more cost-effective but safe construction. With a temporary special regulation for tight housing markets, we are allowing exceptions to the applicable planning law for residential construction projects.
- More pragmatism. We also allow permanent construction in places where previously only simple construction was permitted under special regulations. In addition, we focus on simple and innovative construction.
- Quickly provide more building land. More new construction also requires more building land – especially in the metropolises and growth regions. What is needed is a mix of (inner) densification, new development areas and the addition of storeys to residential and commercial buildings. In close cooperation with the federal states and municipalities, we want to make greater use of brownfield and conversion sites. Federally owned land owned by the Federal Institute for Real Estate is to be used for housing construction.
- Moratorium on construction costs issued. With us, there are no new standards that increase construction costs without significant added value. We reduce planning and ancillary costs by digitizing and accelerating land-use and building permit procedures. Low construction costs and more new construction are also benefiting tenants in particular.
- Make housing subsidies effective. To this end, we are concentrating our funding on multi-storey housing construction in tight housing markets. With a significantly higher, temporary special depreciation for affordable housing, we are giving new construction a kickstart. We supplement this with effective degressive depreciation.
- Incentives for affordable rents. We are adjusting the deduction of income-related expenses so that those who demand less than the local comparative rent will not have any tax disadvantages in the future.
- Make the dream of owning your own four walls possible. More building land and low construction costs help families to build their own property. We are realigning existing subsidy programmes, such as KfW's interest subsidy programmes, by raising income limits and including the purchase of existing properties. We are retaining the existing EH55 energy efficiency standard for new buildings and making it eligible for funding again.
- Assess energy-efficient renovation with inheritance and gift tax. We make costs for energy-efficient renovations deductible from inheritance and gift tax. In this way, we promote the efficient energy-efficient renovation of the real estate portfolio.
- Germany is a country of tenants. We stand for effective and appropriate tenant protection – this also includes the rules on rent levels. The high rents in many training centres are a major problem. Social housing construction must be solidly promoted and housing benefit must be adjusted regularly.

Renewing transport infrastructure, choosing mobility freely

Germany's transport infrastructure is getting on in years. This applies equally to all modes of transport. In addition, there are structural problems, especially at Deutsche Bahn. We must take decisive countermeasures so that the infrastructure is up to date again. People should be able to choose their mobility freely – it is an expression of freedom. It depends on the personal circumstances and the place of residence which means of transport makes sense.

- Yes to the car, maintaining the automotive industry as the leading industry. We see individual mobility as the epitome of freedom and therefore do not play off different means of transport against each other. We reject anti-car attitudes, driving bans for city centres, the rededication of parking spaces and a general speed limit on German motorways. The driver's license must be affordable for young people. To this end, it is important to reduce bureaucracy and make training efficient. The ban on internal combustion engines must be reversed. The fleet limits must be reviewed and penalty payments prevented. For e-mobility, the charging infrastructure must be appropriately expanded.
- Maintain Germany as an aviation location. The total cost of air transport will be reduced to a competitive European level.
- Make public transport more attractive and reliable. It is important to have local public transport that is needs-based and future-proof. This also includes a reliable and robust infrastructure as well as an attractive range of urban and rural services. We want to create new transparency in the financing of public transport and ensure adequate financing.
- Making Deutsche Bahn fit for the future. To this end, we are streamlining the company and repositioning it. For more competition, the infrastructure and transport sectors must be separated more closely than before. The federal government provides the main financing for maintenance, expansion and modernisation. We are paying particular attention to the expansion of cross-border infrastructure, for example in the direction of Poland.
- Reduce transport costs. We are reducing the excessive burden of CO2 pricing and CO2 surcharges in the transport industry.
- Solid financing of infrastructure. We ensure lasting financial stability that is independent of fluctuating budgetary resources. In addition, we need to mobilize more capital in the short term to solve the investment backlog. To this end, we rely on strong incentives for private investors.
- Accelerate and simplify infrastructure projects. Replacement new buildings, insignificant changes or extensions can be approved by a notification procedure instead of the planning approval procedure. The licensing authorities must ensure that the submitted documents are examined quickly.
- Preservation and new construction. We stand for adequate financing of motorways, bridges and road infrastructure.

- Right of way for major projects. The planning approval procedure remains the most suitable instrument for the construction of new large-scale infrastructure. However, it must become more efficient through a mandatory procedural master plan, a cut-off date regulation, an obligation to cooperate and digitalisation.
- Rely on free mobility. Private transport and public transport belong together and must be designed to be barrier-free. Bus, train, boat, plane and car, bicycle and pedestrian traffic complement each other in a meaningful way.
- Dare to use more technology. In addition to electromobility, all climate-friendly options for alternative drive systems and energy-efficient fuels are to be used. These include, for example, e-fuels, hydrogen and sustainable biofuels. We stand for openness to technology.
- Rely on modern mobility. Our goal is to become the technology leader in autonomous driving and sustainable drives for all modes of transport. Innovative mobility
 - especially in aviation – is of great importance to us.
- Link the bike to other means of transport. To this end, we are relying on new cycle paths, the expansion of the network and mobile stations, especially at transport hubs. We are strengthening "shared mobility" as a future market.
- Develop transport. The future of freight transport belongs to emission-free freight transport, rail and waterways. We will also look at new technologies. To combat the shortage of drivers for trucks and buses, we are reforming the professional driver qualification.
- Stop queuing for the license plate. We want to make digital vehicle registration the standard by making it uniform and uncomplicated throughout Germany. This also applies to the involvement of insurers. We are also introducing the digital vehicle file.
- Strengthen the competitiveness of ports and waterways. If you want to expand your trade relations, you have to think about your ports as gateways to the world and promote them ambitiously. The maritime industry – including its naval references – is an important economic sector for us. We are further developing the National Ports Strategy and strengthening the waterways.

Yes to a functioning state – that is our promise for the future

Our plan:

For successful cooperation between the federal, state and local governments.

Sound budgeting, responsible use of taxpayers' money.

Maintain stable money and stable financial markets.

A functioning administration in a functioning state. We act.

For successful cooperation between the federal, state and local governments

Germany is a beautiful country: varied natural landscapes, world-famous sights, diverse culture and history, numerous folk festivals and living customs. Our country lives from the many people who carry it every day with their energy. Medium-sized companies and family businesses create employment and are involved locally. Whether in cities, municipalities or districts, we are a good place to live. To ensure that this remains the case, we assume even greater responsibility for equal living conditions and the needs of the people and rely on successful federalism with strong states and strong municipalities.

- Living well in town and country. We want equal living conditions. We support this through clever urban and village development. Good municipal services of general interest and vital municipal companies are important.
- Increase state efficiency, strengthen regionality and proximity to citizens. We solve the challenges of technical and digital standardization in the state. We give the administration greater freedom to try things out.
- Listen more to the municipalities. The municipalities must be involved at an early stage in federal-state coordination. For a better legislative process, we take greater account of local practical experience.
- Rely on full subsidiarity. We want to strengthen the EU's subsidiarity test and establish such a test at national level in order to be able to better assess the impact of legislative projects on local self-government.
- Strengthen democracy on the ground. Municipal officials and elected officials support our state. That is why we must support and protect them.
- Who orders, pays. We are guided by the principle of connection. For us, it is clear that anyone who initiates or expands a service must pay for its financing. Particular attention should be paid to this if federal laws or other measures of the federal government lead to additional expenditure or reduced revenues for the states and municipalities.
- Reduce mixed financing. People need to be able to understand where the money is going. The states are to make transparent the extent to which they have used money from the federal government appropriately and which municipality benefits and to what extent.
- Livable home. We want municipal services of general interest to be solidly financed. The processes must be faster, the legal processes shorter.
- Keeping expenses under control. The federal and state governments must find solutions in coordination with the municipalities to stop the spending dynamic in social spending.
- Trust in the municipalities. We strengthen cities, municipalities and districts as well as local self-government. In order to ensure a stable financial situation, the municipalities also need secure sources of income in the long term.

- Abolish traffic light voting rights. We stand for the reduction of the size of the Bundestag, but not for the weakening of the direct mandate. Directly elected members of parliament are guarantors of closeness to citizens and independence. In addition, the electoral law must place greater value on the federal character of our Federal Republic. From this point of view, we are striving for reform.
- Simplify subsidies. We are making it easier to process the federal government's municipally-relevant funding programmes by combining them and bundling them on an online platform. We set deadlines realistically, simplify application procedures and reduce the burden of proof.
- Ensure livable and resilient cities. Adaptation to climate change is becoming increasingly important. We support cities and municipalities in the responsible use of water and increased greening. The tree nurseries make an important contribution.
- Develop rural areas, realize equivalent living conditions. To this end, we make greater use of spatial planning. We can relieve conurbations if we expand transport routes and local transport in line with demand. In particular, the "Joint Task of Improving the Regional Economic Structure" remains the guiding instrument for this.
- Better support tourism. It makes an important contribution to regional value creation and employment, housing and quality of life, the maintenance of customs and traditions and the safeguarding of infrastructure. It is particularly important for rural areas.

Sound budgeting, responsible use of taxpayers' money

The budget situation in Germany is tense. National debt is rising and rising, both at the federal level and in the states and municipalities. What Germany needs now is a sound budget policy. Citizens are entitled to demand that the state handle their tax money responsibly. A sound budget policy is also an imperative of intergenerational justice, because debt burdens our children and grandchildren.

- Stick to the constitutional debt brake. It ensures that burdens are not placed on our children and grandchildren. It obliges politicians to make do with the revenues available for the fulfilment of state tasks, thus ensuring the long-term sustainability of the federal budget. Even in times of crisis, it has proven its functionality and flexibility.
- Full concentration on core tasks. Money is tight, so every euro must be used efficiently. We stand for a sound budget policy. Immediately at the beginning of the new legislative period, we are making an honest cash check and questioning all expenditures, especially subsidies. At the same time, we ensure that sound budget management is guaranteed when implementing our projects. Expenditure that misses its target must be eliminated. This creates scope for our policy change. As part of a modernisation of the federal budget, we want to achieve a more

goal- and effect-oriented budget management.

- For a genuine stability union. We clearly reject all forms of German liability for the debts of other states.
- We stand by the Stability and Growth Pact. The Maastricht criteria, in particular the debt ratio of 60 per cent and the annual deficit criterion of three per cent of gross domestic product, must remain binding. Violations must be sanctioned with an automated deficit procedure.
- Observe the principle of subsidiarity. EU budget funds must be used for tasks that create European added value and benefit European citizens.
- Making Europe crisis-proof. We are committed to an insolvency code for member states in order to be better prepared for emergencies.

Maintaining stable money and financial markets

The global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009 changed our banks and capital markets. Since then, there have been new rules in Germany and Europe for greater resilience and stability. We are doing everything we can to avoid new crises, to make our financial centre more efficient and to keep the euro currency system stable. As the largest economy in the euro zone, Germany must remain its anchor of stability.

- Maintain monetary stability, prevent inflation. We are committed to the independence of the European Central Bank (ECB). At the same time, we expect it to work to maintain monetary stability and to fight inflation consistently. We reject government financing by the ECB.
- Further develop the Capital Markets Union. We want to rapidly deepen the Capital Markets Union and strengthen the single market for financial services. After all, every euro invested here is good for growth, jobs and prosperity in Europe. We continuously review the competitiveness of the regulations and compare them with the standards of large, non-European financial centres.
- Prevent burdens on German banks. In all changes at national and European level, we ensure that credit institutions are not unduly burdened and remain internationally competitive. Above all, the special features of our tried-and-tested three-pillar system of private banks, public banks and cooperative banks must be preserved. Our goal is that Germany
 - appropriate to Europe's largest economy – will become Europe's leading financial centre in the future.
- Modernise and make stock corporation law more flexible. To this end, we are expanding the possibilities of capital increases and lowering the minimum nominal value of shares.

- Better inform consumers. Product information sheets must become more customer-oriented and transparent. The development of financial products and their evaluation by investors must not be made unnecessarily difficult by regulatory requirements. We want to defuse the EU taxonomy. It misses reality. We receive fee and commission advice at the same time.
- Get variety of payment methods. We want everyone to be able to decide for themselves how they pay for everyday transactions. We are committed to preserving cash. Because cash is freedom in action. In addition, we are basically open to all new payment methods.
- Digital euro only if there is real added value. We are open to the introduction of a digital euro if it offers real added value, complements cash, does not affect financial stability, protects consumer privacy and can be used free of charge.

A functioning administration in a functioning state

Our state's core task is to serve its citizens. Public sector employees make an important contribution to this every day. With their expertise, experience and commitment, they make a significant contribution to the functioning of our state and our administration. However, reality also shows that far too often the state is preoccupied with itself and gets tangled up in the jumble of rules it has created itself. Our goal is a state that becomes more capable and faster again. Because it is not as a teacher, but only as a service provider that he can regain trust.

- Limit the state immediately. We are reducing the exorbitant increase in the number of commissioners by at least 50 percent and are getting by with at least ten percent fewer staff in the ministerial administration and the Bundestag administration. We want to do better work with fewer staff.
- Building a learning state. We are using the opportunities offered by digitalisation for a more strategic and data-based policy. With a new error culture, we evaluate measures that have been adopted, take back what is not effective, and continuously adapt the measures.
- Performance and proximity to the citizens as a mandatory task. We are making digital enforcement the standard. To this end, we are also consistently implementing the "once-only" principle, according to which citizens and companies only have to submit their data to the administration once. The basic register for companies and the unified company account are important building blocks.
- Giving management greater discretion. We are once again gearing laws and other regulations more closely to the basic application, not primarily to the exceptional case. With an experimentation clause, we are opening up unbureaucratic testing spaces. The decision-makers on the ground must have the certainty of being able to make quick and pragmatic decisions.

- Accelerate planning, approval, and implementation. Regulations that contribute to speeding up procedures in one area must also be transferred to other areas such as transport, construction and digital infrastructures. With a fiction of approval, we ensure that applications to offices and authorities are decided on more quickly. In addition, preclusion should play a greater role.
- Reduce the possibilities of lawsuits and instances, reduce blockades. We are in favour of abolishing the right of collective action for infrastructure projects. We are committed to this at the European level. In the short term, we are examining where the implementation of the relevant directive goes decisively beyond the necessary European regulatory measure. Where possible and sensible, we envisage shortening the appeal process to two instances in the interests of faster legal certainty.

Election call

Dear voters,

Dear citizens,

the joint election program of the CDU and CSU is entitled "Policy Change for Germany". That's exactly what it's all about, a change of policy. It's time for something to change! After three years of traffic lights, Germany needs a fundamentally different policy. It is about our freedom, it is about peace, prosperity, security and the cohesion of our society. And it is about finally leading our country again in a stable and reliable way.

They hold our plan in their hands on how to achieve this. Now we need your support. Help to turn this election program into government action!

Vote for the Union on February 23 with your two votes! Let's work together to bring German to where it belongs: back to the front!

