

**FOR YOU  
FOR TOMORROW  
RIGHT NOW!**



**OUR MANIFESTO  
FOR EUROPE**

déi  
**gréng**

*"Courtesy translation - the German version shall prevail"*

# European election manifesto 2024

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Preamble.....</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>A. A strong European economy that serves everyone .....</b>            | <b>4</b>  |
| 1. Securing prosperity in the long term.....                              | 4         |
| 2. A Europe of social rights .....  | 9         |
| 3. Digitalisation that takes people into account .....                    | 12        |
| 4. Strong consumer protection .....                                       | 14        |
| <b>B. For all of us: modern climate and environmental protection.....</b> | <b>16</b> |
| 1. Climate neutrality - social and citizen-centred .....                  | 17        |
| 2. Affordable, sustainable mobility for all .....                         | 21        |
| 3. Nature conservation and resource protection.....                       | 24        |
| 4. A stable healthcare union.....   | 28        |
| 5. Healthy food at fair prices .....                                      | 30        |
| 6. Protecting animals appropriately.....                                  | 33        |
| <b>C. A democratic, inclusive Europe of human rights.....</b>             | <b>35</b> |
| 1. The defence of fundamental rights and the rule of law .....            | 35        |
| 2. An inclusive European society .....                                    | 38        |
| 3. Bringing Europe together with education and culture.....               | 41        |
| 4. Institutional reforms for a better Europe .....                        | 43        |
| <b>D. A union of peace, security and global justice .....</b>             | <b>46</b> |
| 1. Fair and sustainable international trade.....                          | 47        |
| 2. A humane asylum and immigration policy .....                           | 49        |
| 3. Europe and its responsibility in the world.....                        | 51        |
| 4. Security policy: Together against crime and terror .....               | 54        |

# Preamble

Dear voters, on 9 June 2024 it is that time again: with your vote you can decide the direction of European politics for the next five years.

The last five years have been some of the most turbulent since the founding of our European community. Many of the things we took for granted and the achievements of our common project of peace and prosperity have been called into question by rapidly successive and overlapping crises.

We had to say goodbye to a member state for the first time. The actual departure of the UK made it clear that EU membership is not a one-off and irreversible decision, but a continuous, conscious one: we can decide again and again to remain part of this unique project. At a time when major challenges know no borders, a strong EU guarantees our small country not only prosperity, but also security and stability. We therefore stand for a strong and united Europe of freedom, the rule of law, participatory democracy and sustainability. But our Union is not yet able to withstand crises.

The global COVID-19 pandemic also hit us with full force and turned European society upside down. Border controls and even border closures, even within the Schengen area, negated the principle of the single market and the fundamental right of all Europeans to move freely within the Union. Overburdened healthcare systems fought valiantly against the invisible threat. Supply chains were disrupted, the economy slowed down and social cohesion was put to the test. After some struggle, we managed to work together to find solutions and return to solidarity: Without the European vaccine strategy and economic stimulus packages, the repercussions of the pandemic would have been much worse. And yet it left behind long-term economic, social and political ramifications. We need to learn the right lessons from the COVID-19 era in order to be better prepared in the future.

As the European population breathed a sigh of relief at the beginning of 2022, the next blow was dealt. For the first time in over 25 years, a large-scale open war broke out on our continent. The Russian attack on Ukraine on our external border shook us as a Union and shook the EU states out of their previous geopolitical hibernation. Our dependence on fossil fuels and their autocratic producer states has become obvious. Peace and security cannot be taken for granted on our continent either and must always be vigilantly and resolutely defended.

It quickly became clear that the Russian war of aggression would have far-reaching, tangible consequences for the European economy. The long overdue replacement of Russian gas and oil imports led to an upward spiral of unaffordable energy prices, which in turn triggered a long-term inflationary trend across the entire European market. The spending power of Europeans is shrinking overall and the risk of poverty is increasing in many places. At the same time, large companies and multi-billionaires are benefiting from the economic turmoil. The widening gap between rich and poor is threatening the cohesion of our society and fuelling right-wing populist tendencies across Europe. Social justice must become Europe's main goal. Only a better distribution of wealth can preserve peace and security in the long term.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine are acute, new crises that we have to deal with as a Union. Even if these new challenges have pushed them somewhat into the background, the climate crisis and the great extinction of species have intensified. If we want to secure our natural basis of life in the long term, we must therefore continue to work towards a more sustainable Europe.

In the context of the energy crisis provoked by Russia, we recognized that it is vital to our continent's autonomy and security to transition towards renewable and sustainable energy: more sustainable, safer, cheaper. Take energy as an example: This crisis made it clear that climate and environmental protection measures can create win-win situations and must do so in order to gain social acceptance.

We remain true to ourselves and continue to campaign for climate protection and a healthy and resilient environment. A European Green Deal with strong goals for the preservation of our natural resources must enter the next phase: a social Green Deal that secures European prosperity in a sustainable way and leaves no one behind. With this in mind, we must invest strategically in the climate-neutral modernisation of the European economy in order to secure the competitiveness of our companies and lay the foundations for good jobs, fair wages and a thriving European society.

In this election programme, we present concrete measures for a sustainable, social and economically strong Europe. This is our commitment to a future worth living in Europe and Luxembourg.

## **A. A strong European economy that serves everyone**

The European Union is the third largest economy in the world after China and the USA. The EU therefore retains an important international position despite the rapid rise of emerging economies such as China and India. This would not have been possible without the establishment of the European single market and the free movement of goods, services, people and capital - a single market from which a small and open country like Luxembourg benefits enormously. It is therefore important to defend this achievement.

However, the strength of the single market is also an opportunity to create a strong, social and sustainable European economy for the benefit of all. An EU single market that secures good jobs with good wages for the future and prevents poverty. An economic union that is a champion in climate and environmental protection and sets international standards in these areas. A Union that promotes innovation and is a pioneer in new technologies. In other words, an EU economy that serves everyone.

### **1. Securing prosperity in the long term**

In order to secure long-term and sustainable prosperity in Europe, we need a European economic policy that is geared towards small and medium-sized enterprises and the principles of the circular economy. We are committed to sustainable reindustrialisation, fair tax rules and responsible finance. By investing in the climate-neutral modernisation of the European economy, we are securing the autonomy of our continent, the competitiveness of our companies and good work plans with fair wages.

#### **Investments in the future**

The transition of the European economy towards climate neutrality, independence and resilience requires massive public and private investment. We therefore want to implement a broad investment programme in renewable energies and energy grids, sustainable cross-border mobility, green industry, waste prevention and digitalisation over the next few years. The economic players need to create the right framework for investing in the future. In this way, we secure prosperity, protect our planet and make ourselves as the European Union less dependent on autocratic regimes.

The CSR Directive and the taxonomy set the framework to enable a broad, green investment strategy towards decarbonisation. We now need to develop and promote financial products such as green loans for companies and individuals, which are crucial to steer investments towards decarbonisation.

The overdue reorganisation of the economy enables politicians to provide directional and influential support. The economy is waiting for opportunities to invest in this reorganisation. Investments that are ecologically sustainable or serve to protect the environment should be given special status in the budgetary rules of the member states and allow exceptions to the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). The European Investment Bank (EIB) only finances a small proportion of the €1,500 billion needed annually to decarbonise the European economy by 2050. Nevertheless, this important anchor investor in particular must finally be focussed on fast and immediately reliable financing. The European Central Bank (ECB), on the other hand, must prioritise green bonds when purchasing government bonds, in addition to ensuring price stability and supporting monetary policy decision-making.

In order to also promote private investment in the future, we advocate a modern legal framework for EU state aid rules that enables Member States to use subsidies to provide targeted and effective support for companies switching to climate neutrality, environmental protection and nature conservation, the circular economy and digitalisation. The aim is to provide companies with planning security and to promote future technologies in a targeted, fast and unbureaucratic manner.

In recent years, the EU has built up its own new sources of funding and taken on debt in order to realise important expenditure and investments. In view of the EU-wide challenges we are facing, we will continue to strengthen the EU's own resources in the future.

The creation of a "Green Transition Fund" serves to finance green infrastructure projects such as the expansion of public transport, energy networks and renewable energies. Furthermore, this fund is intended to support the green reindustrialisation of Europe with 1% of the annual EU GDP, which would correspond to around €160 billion in 2022.

## **Green reindustrialisation of Europe**

We are striving for a green reindustrialisation of Europe. By building climate-friendly industry, we are not only making an important contribution to combating the climate crisis, it is also an enormous opportunity for well-paid jobs and prosperity throughout Europe.

Other important economic areas, such as the USA with the Inflation Reduction Act, already have an attractive framework for the establishment of production facilities for future technologies. Europe must face up to this competition. That is why we want to overcome and simplify the current overly complex funding framework and thus ensure that the innovation of the future is conceived and produced in Europe. To this end, we will create and expand EU-wide funding and incentive programmes for future technologies in areas such as microchip production, renewable energies, hydrogen production and sustainable mobility.

Within the "Green Transition Fund", we will mobilise funds to support those structurally weaker regions and member states that are particularly affected by deindustrialisation.

Only through a thriving European industry can we reduce strong dependencies on third countries and thus secure Europe's strategic autonomy. With a European strategy for the relocation of important production areas and the diversification of the supply chains of essential products, we want to make Europe not only more sustainable, but also stronger and more resilient. Essential production areas include energy and medicines, for example.

### **Promoting the circular economy**

Our current linear economic model is not sustainable. It is not efficient, jeopardises the environment and human rights and will cost us dearly in the medium to long term. It also makes us dependent on imports and crisis-prone supply chains. We will therefore massively accelerate the transition towards a circular economy in which resources are reused and not seen as waste.

We want to build a fully renewable, circular and toxic-free economy by 2040, with clear and binding interim targets to reduce the use and consumption of resources by 2030.

Our vision is a fully circular economy in which we reuse, upcycle, share and recycle our products to keep materials in a closed loop. This approach protects resources and the climate and saves consumers money, as the products last longer. We also want to expand educational programmes for responsible and sustainable consumer behaviour. Environmental and consumer protection go hand in hand.

As Greens, we will campaign for the rapid implementation of binding sustainability requirements for products and for EU-wide measures to ensure compliance by the industry.

We will take action against planned obsolescence, which harms both the planet and your wallet. We will therefore extend the minimum guarantee. We will ensure an effective and affordable right to repair. With an EU-wide repair label, we will ensure improved transparency for consumers. We also support the creation of a single market for used goods and refurbishment.

In the past, a large proportion of EU funding for the circular economy was channelled into waste management rather than waste prevention. We will therefore use EU funds specifically to promote the circular design of products and thus prevent waste.

### **Fair tax rules**

Europe needs a tax system that rewards sustainability, prevents poverty, ensures social justice and at the same time guarantees the financing of important public services and investments.

Furthermore, a fair distribution of the tax burden must be guaranteed.

This means that people with a lot of wealth and large multinational companies must also pay their fair share. We will therefore plug tax loopholes and consistently implement and improve the minimum taxation of companies. At EU level, we will campaign for an increase in the minimum taxation of multinational companies. We are also in favour of an EU-wide wealth tax for very high assets, with corresponding tax-free allowances. The additional revenue thus generated will be used to invest in poverty reduction, infrastructure and climate protection.

In order to strengthen tax transparency, we will evaluate and improve the directive on public country-by-country tax reporting by large multinational companies.

To promote climate protection, we will expand and improve emissions certificate trading. In the interests of greater resource efficiency, we will encourage member states to implement the plastic tax more efficiently with the aim of reducing plastic waste.

### **Sustainable finance and banking**

In order to combat greenwashing in the financial sector, adequate regulation including clear Europe-wide criteria is required. An important step has been taken in principle with the introduction of the taxonomy for sustainable activities. We will evaluate the activities labelled as sustainable in the taxonomy and no longer recognise gas and nuclear energy as sustainable activities.

We will reduce the attractiveness of financial services in the area of fossil fuels. To combat greenwashing, we will strengthen European financial supervision and introduce a European label for sustainable investments.

We will oblige financial players to transparently disclose the content of their products and to draw up and implement climate transition plans.

We are in favour of completing the banking and capital markets union, including a common deposit guarantee scheme. In this way, we are countering the communitisation of risks in the event of a financial crisis. European taxpayers should no longer foot the bill for risky gambling by large financial institutions, as was the case in 2009.

We will regulate cryptocurrencies and provide the new European Anti-Money Laundering Authority (AMLA) with the necessary resources to better scrutinise cryptocurrency trading and take consistent action against money laundering and terrorist financing. At the same time, the regulatory strategy must also be flexible and open enough to promote innovations that can modernise and democratise the financial system.



We support the introduction of a digital euro in the spirit of digitalisation and will retain cash.

### **Small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) and start-ups**

Strong small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of the European economy. That is why we will strengthen them and accompany and support them in the transition towards a sustainable, social and welfare-orientated economy.

In addition, we will make it easier for SMBs to access EU funding and investment programmes through simplified application procedures and examine the extent to which bureaucracy- intensive regulations that are no longer up to date and represent a heavy burden for SMBs in particular can be reformed or abolished.

The single market is one of the EU's most important achievements. Small and medium-sized enterprises in particular benefit from fair competition in this market. We will therefore advocate fair competition and continue to improve EU competition law accordingly.

In order to promote innovation on our continent, we want to launch a Europe-wide strategy in favour of start-ups with the aim of creating an attractive framework for founders throughout the EU, e.g. with binding minimum requirements that every country must fulfil. In addition, we want to ensure better EU-wide networking between start-ups and potential investors. After all, innovation and entrepreneurship must not stop at intra-European borders.

## **2. A Europe of social rights**

Our Green and Social Deal puts people and their well-being at the centre of the green transformation and the European economy. We want to protect and extend social rights in Europe. A Europe of social rights must empower and protect workers and communities and be inclusive for all.

### **Tackling poverty and prevention comprehensively**

Everyone has the right to an adequate income. The higher risk of poverty for people who face multiple and interrelated discrimination on a daily basis due to their age, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, gender, origin or disability must be combated more effectively in this context.

A strong social safety net should protect all people in employment transitions and those who cannot work. We will implement an EU framework directive on minimum income to set an adequate level of support (60% of the median wage) in each EU country for people between jobs or who cannot work.

We will establish the temporary EU programme SURE (2020-2022), to support the reduction of unemployment risks in an emergency situation, as a permanent programme to guarantee the livelihood of workers in transition from one job to the next. We continue to advocate for an integrated anti-poverty strategy in the EU to end homelessness and halve child poverty by 2030.

### **Equal opportunities right from the start**

As the early stages of life are the most important, we will implement adequate funding for the European Child Guarantee, which gives parents time for care and the necessary financial resources. At the same time, we want to support parents' participation in the labour market. All children have the right to participate in play, recreation, sport and culture.

All children in the EU should have guaranteed access to high-quality care and education - regardless of their passport. We want to work with the Member States to finally address the urgent need to invest in education and care infrastructure. The current youth strategy expires in 2027; a new strategy that focuses on the needs and potential of young Europeans is to be developed and implemented in the coming years in close cooperation with European youth organisations.

### **Quality jobs for all**

Every European should be able to live on their wages. However, especially after years of rising prices, this is not always the case everywhere. We are therefore fighting to end labour poverty in Europe. During our last term of office, we achieved an EU-wide framework for a living minimum wage that sets minimum wages at an appropriate level and adjusts them to the cost of living. We have pushed through pay transparency measures that will help to end the significant pay gaps within companies and institutions. We will pay particular attention to the full implementation of these measures.

Jobs in key sectors of the future must be well-paid, attractive jobs. We support the role of trade unions to ensure that workers have a say and a fair share of the profits. Our tax proposals will increase the net pay of low and middle income households. At the same time, the tax burden will be shifted to polluters and the ultra-rich in the interests of greater tax justice.

We are committed to equal pay for equal work and in favour of equal opportunities for all in the workplace. It is long overdue to eliminate the EU-wide gender pay gap using binding political measures. Universal access to childcare and the revision of the Work-Life Balance Directive and the Maternity Directive are further areas that we will focus on.

### **Empowering workers**

Our Green and Social Deal protects workers and their rights. We want to build a Union where people are treated fairly and paid for their work. Nothing should be decided about workers

without workers.

We will fight for the right of trade unions to have a say in the organisation of the world of work, collective bargaining and strikes. Workers affected by the twin green and digital transformation should be guaranteed rights to information, participation through collective bargaining and social dialogue, and training. Unionisation for new or non-standard forms of work should be supported to ensure the rights of all workers. These rights and standards should be protected by a just transition law.

We are in favour of a directive for lifelong learning that guarantees the right to paid educational leave.

### **New rights in the working world of the future**

Work must take place under decent conditions and in safe environments. This also applies to interns and trainees. We will end the practice of unpaid internships across the EU so that young people are guaranteed decent pay and safe working conditions. We want systems that strengthen the protection of interns and trainees from exploitation. Mobile work and the posting of workers should be regulated appropriately.

Workplace health and safety measures must be adapted to the reality of the climate crisis and enforced, such as regulations to protect against heatwaves in the workplace. Overwork leads to stress and illness. We will introduce measures to reduce working hours and improve the work-life balance, including an EU right to switch off, the right to work remotely and more flexibility in working hours. We support efforts in those areas where it is possible and useful to introduce alternative working time models, such as part-time models or a four-day week.

We advocate for legislation that recognises platform workers as employees and grants them all the rights to minimum wages, collective bargaining and labour law protection to which they are legally entitled. We will also not allow workers to be monitored or evaluated by AI-based surveillance tools.

## **3. Digitalisation that takes people into account**

Digital technologies are becoming an increasingly important part of our lives. Digitalisation offers innovative solutions to the key challenges of our time and promises much progress in areas such as mobility and road safety, education, health and energy. It harbours tremendous potential for economic development and simplified administrative processes, both for public authorities and for companies and citizens. However, it also harbours a number of risks that can only be tackled at European level.

## **European values also apply online**

Caught between the digitalisation models of American surveillance capitalism and state control like in China, Europe needs rights-based, decentralised digitalisation to reap its benefits without putting our fundamental rights and our democracies at risk.

We want to secure, strengthen and expand Europe's digital sovereignty. We will introduce a European data space that opens up anonymised data for non-commercial purposes that serve the common good, including the fight against the climate crisis.

The latest EU legislation on digital services will provide more choice and transparency on the internet and allow us to take action against infringements of rights and freedoms online. Large digital companies that want to be present in the single market will have to comply with these rules. We will also introduce a Digital Fairness Act to protect users from intrusive online advertising practices.

## **Framing artificial intelligence (AI)**

The advances in the development of artificial intelligence represent a huge opportunity for many areas of life. It can serve people, simplify our lives and increase our prosperity. It can also change and simplify processes in everyday life, science, administration and business. For example, modern AI-supported processes can speed up research processes or help to reduce the use of pesticides.

Artificial intelligence, arguably the biggest technological revolution since the invention of the internet, must, however, be legally framed with foresight. It is already presenting our society with new challenges: examples range from teaching staff warning against the widespread use of artificial intelligence instead of pupils' own brainpower, to findings of prejudice and distorted views of users who adopt and reproduce AI tools.

New technologies must always be used in accordance with our common values, i.e. they must guarantee transparency and respect for fundamental rights. With the AI law, Europe is taking a big step in this direction. We will ensure that this law is implemented carefully and will work to establish a global framework for artificial intelligence.

## **Shaping digitalisation ecologically**

The digital world also has a footprint and this has been growing uncontrollably for years. The basis for sustainable digitalisation is a robust and environmentally friendly infrastructure - from broadband networks to data centres.

In addition to the reuse and recycling of digital devices, we will reduce the energy consumption associated with data processing and cryptocurrencies through a regulation to massively reduce the

material impact of the internet.

We want to emphasise European companies and establish ecological standards in information technology (IT) through data-saving and sustainable solutions and by promoting open source solutions. A Digital Sustainability Act is intended to set these sustainability standards for the IT sector.

### **Security on the net**

We welcome the Digital Services Act voted in the EU Parliament in 2022, which aims to combat hate speech and the spread of harmful misinformation. However, we doubt the enforceability of the DSA, as it does not require major social media to hire moderators who have language skills in all the languages commonly spoken in the EU. So that hate speech and misinformation in Luxembourgish and other languages that are not used by so many citizens are also covered by the DSA, we want the major social networks to have to hire moderators with the necessary language skills.

We want to strengthen and expand the right to secure communication and encryption. This is particularly important for free press reporting or for the work of opposition forces in authoritarian countries. Initiatives such as so-called chat control should therefore be rejected in principle.

## **4. Strong consumer protection**

Strong consumer protection is one of the main successes of the European Union. As European consumers, we have quickly become accustomed to reliable product safety, roaming rights and improved passenger rights across Europe. However, as the economy is changing rapidly, the EU's high standards urgently need to be updated.

### **Good for your wallet and the environment**

We have successfully fought for more consumer protection in recent years. Consumer protection measures have a win-win potential if they save both money and natural resources.

A standardised charging cable for mobile devices will make life easier for consumers while promoting the circular economy and reducing e-waste. We aim to extend this measure to all digital devices such as smartwatches, e-readers and headphones.

Binding ecodesign, which integrates durability, reparability and environmental compatibility, offers consumers better and ultimately cheaper products. We are committed to the swift implementation of the ecodesign regulation revised in the last mandate in order to quickly include relevant product groups such as toys, furniture and clothing.

We have fought hard and successfully for a European "Right to Repair", now we will make sure it is implemented quickly. The right to repair should ensure that consumers have long-term access to spare parts and repair instructions for defective products such as mobile phone batteries, printers and hoovers.

### **Guarantee passenger rights**

Freedom of travel in the EU should be comfortable and safe for all citizens. Passengers should be protected in their rights when travelling through Europe - whether by bus, train or plane. A standardised Europe-wide ticketing system should be introduced to make train journeys more attractive and reduce the planning effort.

We want to protect passenger rights consistently and more strongly. Compensation for rail delays should be increased across Europe to at least 50 per cent of the ticket price after 60 minutes and at least 75 per cent after 90 minutes, in line with the demands of the European Parliament.

We will also strengthen consumers' rights to compensation in the event of flight delays or postponements. Cancellations must not be at the expense of travellers. That is why we want all airlines to have to insure themselves against insolvency. In order to improve baggage regulations, we are campaigning for standardised dimensions for hand luggage and transparent prices for baggage.

### **Protect yourself from dangers and cost traps online**

Consumers should enjoy the same rights online and offline. With an increasing share of online trade, fraud and potentially dangerous purchases from third-party sellers is also rising. We call for more responsibility for online marketplaces, as well as expanded and coordinated authorisation and inspection procedures by customs and market surveillance authorities.

Cancelling online contracts should be just as straightforward as concluding them. However, consumers often have difficulties cancelling contracts concluded online or are unsure about the receipt and legal certainty of their cancellation. This leads to them unintentionally remaining in contracts, which can quickly become a cost trap. For long-term contracts that can be concluded online, we aim to implement an easily accessible cancellation button on company websites.

If there is no clear cancellation option despite the regulation, contracts should be able to be cancelled at any time without a specific notice period. We are in favour of supplementing the relevant consumer directive to give customers back control over their contracts.

## **Do not mislead consumers**

We will ensure that consumers receive clear and comprehensive information on the environmental impact of products and services sold in the EU, including information on the expected lifespan, environmental footprint and repair or disposal options of products.

We will continue to denounce and fight any kind of greenwashing and other forms of misleading consumers, regardless of the type of product.

Quality promises must apply to the entire EU. Products that are marketed in the same way in different European countries must be of the same quality and composition. There must be no first or second class consumers in the single market.

## **B. For all of us: modern climate and environmental protection**

The European Union must reduce its emissions as quickly as possible in line with scientific recommendations and the Paris Agreement. In practice, this means revising the EU climate law to achieve full climate neutrality by 2040 in order to minimise the climate crisis. With the European Green Deal, the EU has introduced important climate and environmental protection measures over the past five years. We welcome the progress that has been made and are committed to implementing the plans that have already been set in motion. We will oppose attempts to water down or reverse the Green Deal initiatives.

Modern and fair climate and environmental protection at European level requires foresight, coherence and sensitivity. In future, the European Union must focus much more on spreading sustainable alternatives and making them more accessible. Those who have access to cheap renewable energies will use them. Those who have access to comfortable and affordable trains or public transport will use them.

Protecting the climate and nature also means protecting people. We will work to ensure that the right to a healthy and clean environment is included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

### **1. Climate neutrality - social and citizen-centred**

Climate neutrality secures our livelihood and leads to a better quality of life and prosperity. However, it is also associated with change and investment. Change can be scary, especially in

uncertain times. In addition, not all citizens have the same means to switch to more sustainable alternatives. That is why climate-neutrality and social justice must go hand in hand.

In this respect, we are proud of the creation of the European Climate Social Fund, which is due to start in 2026, even if the currently planned funding is ridiculously low. The fund can be used by Member States to provide financial support to households and businesses in transition, for example in the areas of energy efficiency and mobility. For this pot of money to be a success, we will continue to campaign resolutely for a much larger budget. The Climate Social Fund should primarily be financed by the big polluters and through revenues from emissions trading.

### **Renewable energies for a sustainable future**

The industrial and transport sectors contribute significantly to global warming. Energy generation from sustainable primary forms, such as solar and wind, is essential for a climate-neutral greenhouse gas balance. In addition to the challenges posed by the climate crisis, the EU's dependence on energy imports poses a risk to the Union. The Russian attack on Ukraine has clearly illustrated this.

We have long been convinced that renewable energy is the key to a sustainable and thriving economy. They are cheaper and safer than any other energy source and have helped the EU economy save 100 billion euros between 2021 and 2023.

We will work to build a community of renewable energies. This community should connect the continent and supply it with energy. Through an energy system that is 100% renewable and fossil fuel free by 2040, we want to ensure a habitable planet, geopolitical independence from autocrats and a resilient and democratically governed energy system. We are also committed to simplifying the bureaucratic procedures for implementing the expansion of energy generation from renewables and supporting transnational projects.

The energy transition will also ensure the complete phase-out of fossil fuels in the EU. The EU needs a clear phase-out plan: Coal by 2030, fossil gas by 2035 and oil by 2040. Europe must take measures to phase out all subsidies for fossil fuels by 2025 at the latest and all other environmentally harmful subsidies by 2027 at the latest. The 2022 energy crisis has cost Europe over a trillion euros in energy subsidies and inflated prices. We and the planet cannot afford this. The billions of euros from fossil fuel subsidies must be channelled into renewables, energy efficiency and energy savings. The commitment to achieving these fossil fuel targets has been reinforced by the agreement reached at the Conference of the Parties to phase out fossil fuels.

### **Energy supply as a fundamental right**

We are convinced that everyone in the EU should have access to sufficient, affordable and renewable energy as a fundamental right. 125 million people in the Union have financial difficulties



heating their homes. Women and older citizens are disproportionately affected. Ending energy poverty must therefore become a key priority.

That is why we support an energy guarantee to provide all households with a sufficient amount of renewable energy at an affordable price. Vulnerable citizens will receive targeted support, including for energy-saving investments, and no vulnerable household will be cut off from the energy supply due to their inability to pay.

Renewable energies guarantee that people will still be able to heat their homes affordably in the future. This is why we support the further development of European requirements for the efficiency of buildings and heating systems in order to quickly and affordably move towards buildings that are less reliant on fossil fuels. We are focussing primarily on advice and financial incentives. With an efficient electricity market, low infrastructure costs and intelligently coordinated mechanisms for electricity consumption and generation, the advantage of favourable electricity generation also remains with the consumer.

### **Energy transition and the labour market**

The proposed solutions to the climate crisis through the energy transition will create millions of attractive jobs in areas such as renewable energy and related construction, industry and transport. The ready-to-launch projects will create two million jobs in the short and medium term and up to ten million in the long term. These figures far exceed the number of people employed in the traditional energy industry, which is around 200,000 and 140,000 jobs in related industries.

The creation of new jobs goes hand in hand with the learning and dissemination of new skills and a training offensive in the skilled trades. The EU must ensure that the workers receive the necessary training and professional reorientation so that they can become an integral part of the green and social energy transition.

However, ensuring that jobs created in the green energy sector far exceed those created in the fossil fuel sector is not enough to ensure a just transition. Labour market policies to promote access to quality jobs through training and retraining programmes and other practical support must ensure that these jobs are actually available. Jobs must be targeted at people who need them most, especially in the least privileged parts of society and the most fossil fuel-dependent regions.

### **Nuclear power: too expensive, too dirty, too dangerous**

Nuclear energy is not and will not be part of the green transition and is not a sustainable source of energy for people and the planet. Nuclear power plants rely on fossil fuels for construction, decommissioning, fuel processing, uranium mining and uranium enrichment, thus contributing to increased greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, nuclear energy is too expensive, uneconomical and unsafe. We also have to import most of our uranium, some of it from autocracies and

dictatorships, and therefore remain dependent on energy resources.

Nuclear power plants are vulnerable energy sources. In terms of the consequences of possible accidents, they represent a destructive danger. Even without accidents, there is a toxic problem for which there is still no permanent solution: Nuclear waste. Nuclear power plants produce huge amounts of toxic waste, and the radioactivity of the waste will remain for thousands of years. Exposure to radioactive waste can cause cancerous tumours in humans and genetic damage or mutations in animals and plants.

For these reasons, we will continue our fight against the inclusion of nuclear energy in the EU's green finance taxonomy, as we did in the previous mandate. The inclusion of nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy for sustainable investments has a negative impact. Billions of euros will be withdrawn from investments in renewable energy and other green technologies and invested in gas, nuclear energy and other fossil fuels. This will lead to underinvestment where it is most needed - in renewable, clean and green energy.

## **Green hydrogen**

Green hydrogen produced exclusively from renewable energy sources must play a key role in achieving our climate protection goals. It is crucial that the hydrogen we use in the EU comes from sustainable sources. We will continue to work to ensure that hydrogen is not produced using nuclear energy, fossil fuels or gas, but only using renewable energy. The investments channelled into the EU hydrogen bank should be used exclusively for renewable hydrogen.

It is also particularly important to us that human rights standards are respected in the production and transport of hydrogen. There are already worrying developments in this regard, especially on the African continent. Energy strategies must not be implemented in favour of some and at the expense of others.

Hydrogen is an energy carrier, like wind and sun, and not an energy source. Compared to the direct utilisation of electricity, the use of hydrogen via a diversion requires many times more energy. Its production is complex and its exact potential is still uncertain. One thing is clear: hydrogen only has a future in very specific areas. It will be used in sectors that do not have direct access to alternatives, such as shipping or air transport, or in industrial processes such as the production of steel.

## **Carbon storage as a complementary instrument**

Carbon storage has been identified as one of the key technologies for achieving climate neutrality in the EU. The storage of emissions is to take place at large point sources such as fossil fuel power generation or industrial plants, and then be used in a range of applications or injected into deep geological formations such as depleted oil and gas reservoirs for storage. Carbon storage could thus

prevent emissions from being released unchecked into the atmosphere, for example in industrial sectors where achieving climate neutrality is still proving difficult.

To ensure that the climate neutrality targets are achieved, an EU-wide target for the capture of CO<sub>2</sub> was introduced with the legally binding goal of achieving an annual injection capacity of at least 50 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030. Reporting mechanisms have been introduced as part of the Net Zero Industry Act.

We will ensure that carbon capture acts only as a complementary tool and does not become a pretext to circumvent important measures to actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We will also ensure that carbon capture and storage must be safe for the environment and for people, and the cost factor in comparison to structural emission-reducing measures.

### **Tightening up the regulation of CO<sub>2</sub> certificates**

Carbon offsetting, i.e. the compensation of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, hardly contributes to achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement from a global perspective, as the aim is to drastically avoid and reduce emissions and not simply to compensate for them. There are often alternatives to emission-intensive activities and utilising these should be the primary goal. Only when there is no other option should we resort to offsetting. We are in favour of better regulation of private carbon offsetting mechanisms to improve their effectiveness and prevent greenwashing. This includes the implementation of stricter regulations that guarantee that CO<sub>2</sub> certificates are only issued for verifiable, measurable and long-term emission reductions.

## **2. Affordable, sustainable mobility for all**

We want everyone to be able to get around easily and cost-effectively using sustainable, public and safe means of transport. Mobility connects people, communities and companies. Today, however, transport systems are biased in favour of the wealthy and against the less well-off. The latter suffer the most from air and noise pollution, and in less well-connected rural and suburban communities, people often have no choice but to travel by car.

The modal shift will help us to achieve the climate protection targets that have been set. Shifting from air and road transport to rail and other sustainable modes of transport will allow us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while ensuring better connectivity within the Union. The effects of greenhouse gas emissions, such as global warming and air pollution, have a negative impact on the health of citizens, especially those who are most vulnerable.

A fair and social mobility policy places greater responsibility on the wealthy to ensure that all Europeans contribute to climate protection. We advocate the introduction of a paraffin tax for air

travel, as this is currently heavily subsidised indirectly in return for train travel due to the lack of such a tax. However, the many private jets flying through European airspace are a bigger problem. In the same way exceptions for luxury cars with regard to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions are also unjust. We will continue to campaign against such fundamentally unjust measures in the next mandate.

### **A plan for affordable, sustainable mobility**

We will introduce a European climate ticket so that an affordable public transport ticket is available everywhere in Europe that can be easily used for different modes of public transport. This European climate ticket will serve to mobilise all people, especially those on low incomes, and reduce climate-damaging emissions.

We will ensure that fairer transport prices reflect the actual costs of polluting transport by taxing fuels appropriately. We will campaign for a long overdue paraffin tax for the aviation industry. This tax will make it possible to invest public money in more environmentally friendly, efficient and safer means of transport that will connect Europe and its inhabitants in a sustainable and cost-effective way. As a result, rail transport will finally be able to keep up with air transport, which is often cheaper.

Europe also needs to invest in better public transport, cycling networks and people-centred urban planning, both in cities and in rural communities. Only if we give public transport much more space can we reduce the air pollution and emissions caused by private transport. The gradual phasing out of combustion engines will also contribute to this goal. To make electric cars affordable and create a second-hand market, the EU should mandate their introduction in company fleets.

### **Connecting Europe with modern trains**

Rail transport has great potential for the transport transition and passenger comfort. We need to massively increase investment in rail transport at EU level in order to connect Europe sustainably. The rail infrastructure in many European regions is in poor condition, outdated and in many parts of Central, Northern and Eastern Europe there are no high-speed trains at all. The EU must therefore prioritise investment in the modernisation and interoperability of the rail networks in these regions.

To promote sustainable long-distance travel, we will invest in overnight train infrastructure and set up a European ticketing platform to make it easier to book cross-border journeys using sustainable modes of transport. We will also facilitate the transport of bicycles simplify long-distance rail travel across Europe. Rural areas and poorly connected regions will be prioritised for transport investment, including car-sharing initiatives and ferries.

We are already working tirelessly to make Europe's rail infrastructure more efficient so that citizens have the opportunity to actively participate in the transport transition. In the Regulation on

"Improving the use of rail infrastructure capacity", we focus on the need for greater efficiency in the rail sector so that we can create a truly intermodal and harmonised system in the EU that works for all citizens. This also requires ensuring fair prices, accessibility for people with disabilities, safety and reliability for all customers. We continue to advocate the establishment of a European platform that collects all data on cargo trains recorded during international train journeys and makes it available to rail transport companies. This will enable better coordination at international level, more accurate evidence, maintenance planning and long-term predictability (material wear, risk of accidents, etc.).

### **Air transport fit for the future**

If rail transport in Europe is consistently expanded and improved, air traffic can be gradually reduced, even if we will still be dependent on air and sea transport in the future.

We want the European Union to become a pioneer in the development of climate-neutral aviation technologies. With this in mind, we are committed to multiplying public investment in research projects, such as the "Clean Aviation" programme, a European Union research and innovation programme to transform aviation towards a sustainable and climate-neutral future. This programme also aims to tackle the under-researched negative effects of air traffic.

As long as aircraft are still powered by fossil fuels, short-haul flights should be limited if there are realistic alternatives. In this context, we will also fight to limit the use of private jets. Every kerosene-fuelled flight by a private jet exceeds the annual carbon footprint of an average consumer many times over. Public subsidies for private aviation should be stopped and taxes in this sector should be raised across Europe.

### **Together for more road safety**

The number of road deaths (20,600 in the EU in 2022) is still far too high. Road accidents are the most common cause of death worldwide in the 5 to 29 age group. The EU has set itself the target of cutting the number of road deaths by 50% by 2030 and reducing the number of road deaths to zero by 2050. We want to achieve these goals through concerted action to increase road safety.

Lower speed limits, traffic calming measures and the redesign of public spaces would not only have significant safety benefits for all road users in European cities, but would also reduce noise and air pollution and would therefore be a win-win situation.

We must ensure that the data used to create legislation includes all members of society so that the roads, but also the cars, are safe for everyone. This means, for example, that efforts to use female car crash dummies in vehicle testing must continue. It also means making roads more accessible and safer for people with disabilities or impairments, children and the elderly.

When we talk about road safety, we need to ensure that all road users are respected and can move

around safely. This applies to cyclists and pedestrians as well as people travelling by car or tram. The European transport infrastructure must be adapted and made safe for everyone.

### **3. Nature conservation and resource protection**

Clean air, clean water, fertile soils and biodiversity are essential for our lives and the well-being of all, but they are limited resources.

The European Green Deal of 2019 and the resulting initiatives were a start, but the state of our environment has only improved insufficiently since then and, on the contrary, has worsened in many places, partly due to the climate crisis that is already making itself felt. We must therefore step up our efforts to protect the environment instead of easing up.

#### **Protecting ecosystems and biodiversity**

One million species are currently threatened with extinction. This can be attributed to damaged ecosystems, the use of pesticides and the climate crisis. This is why 10% of the EU budget must be allocated to biodiversity targets from 2026. We will restore degraded ecosystems across the EU. We want to protect one third of EU territory and marine areas so that we can live in harmony with nature, including wetlands, forests, marine and agro-ecosystems, rivers and lakes. As outlined in the Nature Restoration Act that we fought for, we want to restore already degraded natural areas. Collaboration with farmers and local communities is key here.

#### **Healthy forests contribute to clean air**

Our forests are threatened by deforestation and the consequences of the climate crisis. They are our lungs and life support system, harbour the majority of land-based animals and plants and are important carbon sinks. Forests also play a crucial role in providing clean air, regulating the water cycle and preventing soil erosion. Protecting and restoring forests is key to achieving our climate goals.

We believe that old-growth forests, close-to-nature management and biodiversity-friendly afforestation and restoration are crucial for healthy forests in Europe. We need a common forest fire strategy by planting semi-natural mixed forests. We are determined to avoid unnecessary clear-cutting and to establish protection corridors. We need immediate action to protect forests from poor management, pollution and the climate crisis.

#### **Our natural carbon reservoirs: the oceans**

Just like the forests, the oceans are also carbon sinks. Oceans absorb 90% of the heat generated by

rising emissions. As the excess heat and energy warms the oceans, the temperature change leads to unprecedented cascading effects such as ice melt, sea level rise, marine heat waves and ocean acidification. Biodiversity and ecosystems, which are crucial to life on Earth, are being severely impacted. Rising temperatures increase the risk of irreversible loss of marine and coastal ecosystems. Far-reaching changes can already be observed today.

Europe's marine regions must therefore be protected. From the Baltic Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, we must introduce a law on the seas and oceans that establishes the right to clean, healthy and sustainable seas and oceans. We will implement a strategy that will lead to a clean marine environment by 2030. Many species of fish, sharks and other marine life are threatened with extinction. To preserve marine ecosystems and protect access for local communities, overfishing practices must be stopped and alternative sustainable economic models for coastal communities must be developed. It is not just about the amount of fish we catch, but also how we catch it. We will finally put an end to bottom trawling.

We will also fight against deep-sea mining and call for a global moratorium. It is high time to protect the ecosystems of the deep sea. We will oppose any expansion of offshore oil and gas extraction.

## **Clean air**

A European Union with less air pollution will be a much healthier place to live. Air pollution is responsible for 300,000 premature deaths in the EU every year, with children being the most affected. Air pollution contributes to atmospheric acidification and ozone depletion. This has a direct negative impact on forests, ecosystems, crops and human health. We must continue our fight to ensure that clean air is fully respected as a fundamental human right.

We will raise European air quality standards and ensure that they are respected. By 2030, air quality in the EU must comply with World Health Organisation guidelines so that air pollution does not pose a threat to public health.

By progressively phasing out fossil fuels, we will significantly reduce the level of pollutants in our air and thus counteract air pollution. The transport transition can contribute to cleaner air through more electromobility, increased rail transport and the use of hydrogen. Air quality limits must also be tightened in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

New technologies such as carbon capture could be part of the solution here, but they still must prove themselves. The best emissions and fine particles are those that are not emitted in the first place.

Green spaces and vegetation can make a huge contribution to air quality in urban areas. With a European strategy for urban greening, we want to improve the air and quality of life for city dwellers across Europe.

## **A toxic-free Europe**

The EU chemicals strategy already calls for a "toxic-free" environment by 2050. Although the EU is making great progress towards this goal, many chemicals that are highly hazardous to human health continue to be produced, used and exported.

"Perpetual" chemicals, such as perfluorinated and polyfluorinated chemicals (PFAS), are a thorn in our side. Present in food packaging, cosmetics, textiles and other consumer products, they accumulate over time in the environment, humans and animals and can lead to health problems such as liver damage, thyroid disease, obesity, fertility problems and cancer. We will continue to campaign for a ban on perpetuating chemicals to protect our health and the environment.

The European Commission promised a revision of the European Chemicals Regulation (REACH) back in 2020. We will ensure that this revision finally takes place. The most harmful chemicals must be replaced and stricter risk assessments and conditions of use must be introduced for all chemicals. We want the industry to take responsibility for dealing with the risks posed by chemicals and provide all data on the hazards of the substances.

When it comes to chemicals and pollution, microplastics should not be neglected. Once released into the environment, microplastics are not biodegradable and often contain chemicals. It accumulates in water, soil and animals and is consequently also ingested by humans as food. We will implement European awareness campaigns on the risks and avoidance of microplastics, the continuation of measures to reduce and safely process plastic waste and an end to the use of microplastics in cosmetic products.

## **United against natural disasters**

Efforts to restore nature and adapt to the climate crisis will restore water retention in rural and urban areas through the revitalisation of rivers and floodplains. To recognise the key role of water, water must be included and integrated into all relevant EU policies.

The green transition must go hand in hand with a strong cohesion policy so that all European regions can benefit from it. Therefore, the enlarged EU Solidarity Fund will focus on climate adaptation and natural disaster preparedness. Earmarked and direct financing of climate action by the EU can help reduce the budgetary and political pressure on cities and municipalities and enable them to shape and lead change locally.

Similarly, and based on the principle of European solidarity, we will create a European fund for natural disasters. We will also develop and co-finance the European Fire Brigade, including a pool of qualified and voluntary personnel, firefighting equipment, assets and firefighting aircraft, as well as an emergency coordination centre. These measures will increase the EU's resilience to natural disasters.



## **4. A crisis-proof healthcare union**

Unfortunately, cross-border nature also includes pathogens that have the potential to paralyse our society. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented our healthcare systems with enormous challenges. It became clear that the European Union was not sufficiently prepared for such a health crisis. The uncoordinated measures and the lack of solidarity between the member states and towards developing countries have severely shaken confidence in the European project. Even before COVID-19, the Eurobarometer showed that 70% of Europeans wanted the EU to focus more on health issues. We must therefore use this pandemic as a turning point.

### **Learning the right lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic**

To meet cross-border challenges such as pandemics and promote public health, there is a need for increased cooperation and more EU expertise in this area.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) must be strengthened financially and in terms of personnel. We want to make the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) an independent European agency and provide it with more resources. This will enable the ECDC and HERA to better support and coordinate the measures of the Member States, develop joint civil protection plans and organise regular stress tests to assess the EU's crisis management capability. In addition, work must be done to harmonise pandemic legislation and integrate national measures into overall European strategies.

We want to create European databases to provide a quick overview of material stocks, medicines and available beds in times of crisis. We are also in favour of the creation of a strong healthcare network and the establishment of a European healthcare corps in EU hospitals.

In addition, we support a holistic policy against zoonoses to prevent future pandemics, with the establishment of a permanent committee for the research and prevention of zoonoses within the World Health Organisation. This committee should be provided with sufficient resources to make scientifically sound decisions and develop guidelines independently of political or economic influences. At international level, the "One Health" approach must become a key strategy for the prevention of future zoonoses.

### **A European Health Union based on solidarity**

Health must be integrated into all policy areas, with a focus on prevention. However, a strong European health policy is also required. In our interconnected internal market, crises in the healthcare sector can only be successfully tackled together. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the consequences of austerity measures in the healthcare sector: overstretched,

underfunded public healthcare systems, a worrying shortage of nurses and doctors in many member states, increasing shortages of medicines and insufficiently publicly funded healthcare research. The European Health Union, which is still in its infancy, is therefore facing major challenges, but together we are stronger.

The welfare of patients must be at the centre of European healthcare policy and not the profits of pharmaceutical industry shareholders. Citizens have a right to affordable healthcare that transcends national borders. The European Health Union should guarantee universal healthcare for all in the European Union and ensure access to affordable medicines and treatments.

### **A sustainable healthcare policy**

The European Health Data Space project harbours great potential for more efficient cooperation between national systems and especially for the promotion of transnational health research. However, transparency and data protection must be strictly applied here. We are committed to ensuring that patients can decide at any time what happens to their own health data.

"Strategic autonomy" is a concept that we also want to establish in the healthcare sector. To make the European Union more independent and safer, we will increase the production of medicines at EU level. To ensure access to medicines and vaccines, we advocate the establishment of public and independent laboratories, research and development centres and dedicated supply chains for part of the production of medicines to reduce dependence on the pharmaceutical industry. To prevent medicine shortages, we will introduce a European monitoring system and encourage more coordination between member states.

To promote medical innovation that is based on the real needs of patients, we will implement a European investment plan in health research with a comprehensive inventory of current knowledge and treatment gaps. Where public money is invested in the development of therapies and medicines, we demand absolute transparency from the pharmaceutical industry regarding research results and actual development costs. We also advocate the licensing of patents on medicines, which allows licences to be released in emergencies to protect public health.

We are committed to a progressive drug policy throughout the EU, including the legalisation of cannabis. People suffering from addiction to harder drugs should finally no longer be criminalised. They should no longer be penalised for their illness, but should receive the support they need to build a healthy and drug-free life.

## **5. Healthy food at fair prices**

How and what is produced in agriculture and the food industry and ends up on our plates has a major impact on our health, the environment, animals and biodiversity. Agriculture, one of the main

victims of the climate crisis, is itself responsible for a significant proportion of climate- damaging greenhouse gas emissions, but can also be an important ally in the fight against global warming. The same applies to the preservation of clean water, soil fertility and biodiversity.

Despite regular reforms, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is not delivering the necessary results, but continues to promote ever more intensive agriculture with harmful monocultures and factory farming. A Europe-wide switch to a sustainable, climate-friendly and fair food system is essential to secure the production of affordable, healthy food in the long term and to offer Europe's farmers prospects for the future. We are therefore in favour of a real turnaround in agricultural and food policy. We want to introduce a holistic food policy that encompasses the entire food chain.

### **A right to healthy food**

Millions of Europeans have had to contend with rising food prices in recent years. No one should have to go without healthy, sustainable and locally produced food because it is too expensive. It is time to put an end to food speculation responsible for rising household food prices and fuelling world hunger. Super profit taxes in the food sector should curb speculation on food. We also want to enshrine the right to healthy food as a legal principle in EU legislation, with social mechanisms at national level that guarantee access to healthy food while supporting local supply chains.

Everyone has the right to healthy food. Many risk factors for non-communicable diseases such as cancer or diabetes (type II) are diet-related. An unhealthy diet is a complex problem, but at the European level there remains a lot to be done about reducing its risk factors. In continuity with the Farm-to-Fork strategy, we are committed to greater transparency for consumers, more plant- based nutrition, combating health claims on the packaging of unhealthy foods, introducing a standardised food traffic light system and curbing marketing practices that encourage people to buy unhealthy products.

Healthy nutrition also means that our food needs to be free from pesticides. We need to reduce the use of chemical pesticides to protect ecosystems, keep soils healthy and maintain human and animal health. In the last mandate, both the Member States and the European Parliament failed in this respect: the Council could not agree against a renewal of the authorisation of glyphosate and a conservative majority in the EU Parliament brought down a European proposal to reduce chemical pesticides. But we are not giving up and will continue to fight to reduce the use of pesticides by 50% by 2030. Glyphosate is neither necessary for productive agriculture nor for weed control. Glyphosate can and must be banned throughout the EU, and farms must be supported economically so that they can make this switch.

### **No genetic engineering on our plates**

The use of genetic engineering in agriculture contributes to the expansion of monopolies by large agricultural corporations and the increasing patenting of seeds, which we resolutely oppose.

It also harbours insufficiently researched risks for biodiversity and health. We continue to fight for GMO-free agriculture and against the massive import of genetically modified food, particularly from deforested areas in South America.

For some years now, the industry has been making a lot of promises about new genetic engineering methods such as CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats). These new methods, which involve tampering with the DNA of a plant, are supposed to be the solution to the climate crisis, water shortages and excessive use of pesticides. These promises have not yet been scientifically substantiated, but it is certain that this is indeed genetic engineering, with uncertain consequences for the environment and humans.

In complete disregard of the precautionary principle, the European Commission proposed to ease the existing European rules on genetically modified plants for these new methods: for up to 20 genetic modifications, there would be no authorisation procedure, no risk assessment, no traceability and no labelling, which means zero transparency for consumers and farmers. For organic farms, whose products must be GMO-free, this would be an existential threat. We continue to campaign for the right to say no to genetic engineering on your own plate. Every type of genetic engineering should be thoroughly risk-assessed and must be labelled.

### **Fair support for agricultural businesses**

We want to ensure that farmers receive a fair price for their products. Unfair practices in the food chain must be combated more thoroughly and the voice of producers must be strengthened. Small and medium-sized farms and young farmers must also be supported with massive investments. Decades of misguided agricultural subsidies have contributed to the concentration of land ownership in Europe and driven small and medium-sized farms to ruin. We finally need a fair and sustainable agricultural turnaround! Away from pointless land subsidies, towards performance-related subsidies and concrete support in the transition to more sustainable production methods. We are expanding organic farming in all EU member states to at least 25 per cent by providing sufficient funding and guaranteeing the expansion target in the Organic Action Plan and the national strategic plans.

The current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) expires in 2027. We insist on thorough interim evaluations and, if necessary, improvements to the national strategic plans for implementing the CAP, as well as a rigorous evaluation after the end of the current programming period, especially regarding the promised climate and environmental benefits of this policy.

## **System thinking instead of silo thinking: a European food policy**

The European Union needs a common food policy that does not think in silos but covers the entire food chain. When the current Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies expire, they are to be replaced by this new, comprehensive policy. The Common Food Policy will link European agricultural and fisheries subsidies to social and ecological criteria to create high-quality jobs and secure food security in the long term.

This means that in the future, one third of the EU budget would be allocated to sustainable food systems that improve soil quality, reduce emissions and reduce food waste, while at the same time improving the economic situation of farms. Under this policy, cross-border problems and trends, such as the worrying rise in diet-related diseases or the European overproduction of animal products, can be tackled holistically.

## **6. Protecting animals appropriately**

Animals are sentient beings capable of suffering. This fact is recognised by the European treaties and must be considered in the implementation of European and national policies. Nevertheless, there are still too many gaps and weaknesses in European legislation on the protection of animals.

In 2020, after almost 20 years of stagnation, the European Commission promised to revise all outdated EU animal welfare legislation and modernise it in accordance with the latest scientific findings. In 2021, the Commission then promised to implement the demands of the successful European citizens' initiative "End the Cage Age" and ban cage farming in the European Union. In response to a Green initiative and under Green leadership, the European Parliament spent two years scrutinising the appropriateness of existing EU regulations on animal transport. Here, too, a considerable need for improvement was identified and recommendations were made to the Commission.

Unfortunately, little of the major promises on animal welfare have been realised to date. After years of waiting and procrastination, the Commission presented only a weak improvement proposal on animal transport and a new proposal on the protection of dogs and cats towards the end of the mandate. Further legislative proposals on caging, slaughter and labelling were shelved shortly before publication.

## **Enough waiting: more animal welfare, now!**

The European institutions must take the scientific, civil society and parliamentary demands for greater animal welfare seriously and implement them. We will finally make animal welfare a priority at EU level, adopt stricter regulations for husbandry, transport and slaughter, and prohibit any kind of mistreatment of animals.

We continue the citizens' fight against cage farming and other cruel practices such as force-feeding, continue to campaign for a maximum transport time of eight hours, and fully support the European Citizens' Initiative for a Fur-Free Europe.

We are committed to improving the implementation of animal welfare requirements in existing legislation. This includes increased and more efficient controls and consistent and severe penalties for non-compliance.

Our proposed Common Food Policy will redirect the funds currently used to support unsustainable industrial livestock farming towards improving farming systems in the interests of animal welfare. Mobile slaughter structures and transport of meat instead of live animals will also be promoted.

## **Targeted promotion of the phase-out of animal testing**

Since 2010, European legislation has aimed to completely abolish animal testing in the long term. In theory, animal testing is already banned in the cosmetics industry in the European Union. We will implement a strict enforcement of this ban and are in favour of extending this ban to additional economic sectors.

Thanks to a successful European Citizens' Initiative and pressure from the European Parliament, there is now a European roadmap to phase out animal testing for chemicals. We will continue to implement a comprehensive phase-out strategy that covers all areas in which animal testing is currently still carried out and includes concrete measures and milestones towards a complete phase-out.

In medical research, animal experiments must be replaced by alternatives where they already exist and the 3R concept (Replace, Reduce, Refine) must be consistently applied. A perspicacious European strategy for phasing out animal testing also includes increased support and cooperation for ambitious research into alternatives.

## **Protecting wildlife together**

The number of wild animals in Europe and beyond our borders is dwindling. Many species are under threat as their habitats shrink and at the same time are polluted by chemicals and microplastics. We want to protect wildlife by better protecting their habitats and migratory areas. Animals know no borders, so we need to think across borders when it comes to conserving and restoring their natural habitats. We will implement more funding for European initiatives and cooperation in the monitoring and protection of endangered species, such as cross-border wildlife

corridors. We will continue to campaign against invasive and alien species that jeopardise our ecosystems.

The return of lynx and wolves to the EU's landscapes caused a lot of uproar and some emotional announcements under the von der Leyen Commission, but these are not scientifically justified. On the contrary, science shows how important wolves are for maintaining a natural balance and preventing zoonoses. We continue to defend the special and protected status of these species. To enable peaceful coexistence and avoid conflicts with livestock farming, we are committed to promoting programmes for the management of the wolf population and other predators.

We are campaigning for the EU to do more to protect wild animals at a global level. This includes combating the illegal wildlife trade and banning the import of hunting trophies into the European Union. We will implement the introduction of a positive EU list for pets to effectively curb the trade in wild animals. We will implement an end to the use of wild animals in the entertainment industry (e.g. in circuses).

## **C. A democratic, inclusive Europe of human rights**

### **1. The defence of fundamental rights and the rule of law**

Good governance and compliance with the principles of the rule of law are fundamental to the preservation of fundamental rights and the development of European society. It is important to protect civil society and democratic political actors, especially in countries with autocratic systems.

In the recent past, democracy and freedom of expression in some European countries have been increasingly undermined by their own governments. As a Green Party in the European Union, we are deeply disappointed by the political and social developments in Hungary in recent years, which represent a step backwards in terms of democratic values and fundamental rights. At the same time, we view with confidence the recent developments in Poland, which initially was following a similar path, but has managed to embark on a new and hopeful path thanks to the strength of its democracy. The Slovakian government, for its part, seems to be following the Hungarian example as far as authoritarian excesses are concerned.

#### **The EU as the guardian of democracy**

We call on the European party families to defend and uphold the proclaimed European values and human rights more strongly and to demand this commitment from their member parties in their countries. It is essential that the EU takes decisive action when authoritarian governments attempt

to dismantle the rule of law. The EU Commission, the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice have already achieved important successes in such cases, but further action and permanent instruments are needed in the face of new challenges.

For example, we will implement the introduction of an independent body of constitutional experts that regularly reviews all member states for compliance with fundamental democratic values and the rule of law. If national governments fundamentally violate the principles of the rule of law, EU funding should only be paid out directly to municipalities and other recipients of funding until all fundamental democratic values are respected again. EU funds that are supposed to serve the common good, democracy and the rule of law must not be allowed to end up in the hands of autocrats and their allies.

Particularly because many voices are currently warning of a substantial shift to the right in the European elections, we want to make it clear what we stand for. For a tolerant, open and colourful society. The major steps towards the liberalisation of social norms that have been fought for by social movements in recent decades, such as gender equality, the right to abortion, the right to freely express sexuality, etc., are part of the European model for us and are therefore not up for debate. We are equally clear that there will be no alliances or pacts with the two far-right blocs (the Group of European Conservatives and Reformists and the Identity and Democracy Group) within the Parliament.

### **The right to peaceful activism**

Peaceful engagement for a pluralistic civil society and civil conflict resolution must be actively promoted in the EU. We are committed to democracy and human rights and strengthen independent media and non-violent pro-democracy movements, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and human rights defenders in the analogue and digital space.

We want to expand existing funding opportunities and financially stabilise the relevant protection instruments and institutions, such as special rapporteurs and the European Democracy Fund, and make them more accessible and sustainable. This should also create and strengthen spaces for exchange and networking between civil society organisations, pro-democracy movements, independent media and individual activists.

Human rights defenders risk a lot. They need our protection, our solidarity and our active support. We want to consistently implement the EU guidelines on the protection of human rights defenders. An intersectional gender perspective is important here, as women and marginalised groups, such as defenders of indigenous rights and activists from the LGBTQIA+ community, are often exposed to a higher risk of violence. We want to offer vulnerable human rights defenders and their families protection in the EU with faster and simplified visa issuance.

We are committed to ensuring that the EU's representations abroad stand up for human rights



defenders. This includes, for example, monitoring court proceedings of political prisoners, creating international visibility, providing emergency aid or organising regular exchanges/meetings. This also applies to those who defend the right to conscientious objection. As part of our support for human rights defenders, we are committed to providing EU missions abroad with more training around conflict-sensitive democracy promotion and human rights protection.

Following the example of the Canadian resettlement programme, we are campaigning for a European protection programme for human rights defenders that enables them to obtain protection quickly and unbureaucratically and to continue their work in a safe environment.

Attacks on human rights defenders are increasingly taking place in the digital space. To protect them, we support secure, encrypted communication options and the right to use the internet anonymously and are campaigning against the further fragmentation of the internet and internet shutdowns.

Investigative journalists and whistleblowers also need special protection. They bring crimes and social ills to light. Their Protection is an essential component of press freedom and the rule of law, which must be urgently defended both internally and externally.

## **2. An inclusive European society**

The political shift to the right in many European countries threatens the progress that Europe has made in terms of openness, tolerance, equality and inclusivity in recent decades. More than ever, we stand for a social and open Europe with heart and mind, in which no one is discriminated against.

We are committed to equal rights for all. That is why we want the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union to become directly applicable and fundamental rights to become a direct competence of the Union. This would allow European citizens whose rights are violated at national level to appeal to the European Court of Justice, for example. This would close the gap created by the fact that many decisions of the European Court of Human Rights have not been implemented in the EU Member States, while the Union has still not finalised its accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, which is provided for in the Lisbon Treaty. A Union of equal rights needs a strong anti-discrimination law that is applied throughout Europe in all areas of society.

### **For a society of diversity**

Human rights apply to all people. They are the prerequisite for a life in freedom and must apply regardless of where a person comes from, the colour of his or her skin or what he or she believes in. A Europe that holds together in its diversity and protects the rights of each individual creates democratic progress, participation and freedom for all. To fulfil this promise, the EU must take consistent legal action against all forms of racism and discrimination.

In recent years, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and antiziganism, LGBTQIA+ phobia and other forms of hatred have been on the rise. Far-right parties are gaining influence with their tried and tested tactics of spreading half-truths and scapegoating minorities. This conservative backlash is strategically working to roll back rights and freedoms. Even staunch supporters of the European project, even moderate conservatives, are opening the door to undemocratic forces that threaten the rule of law. We are resolutely opposed to this.

### **A feminist Europe**

We are fighting for the expansion of reproductive freedom. Sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the right to safe abortion, are fundamental rights that are currently under threat in several Member States. For us, they belong in the EU treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Safe and legal abortion must be available in all EU Member States. We stand up against the devastating regression of reproductive rights worldwide. No one should be criminalised for using or seeking abortion services. We are also in favour of providing free high- quality contraceptives for all.

All people have the right to a life without violence and without any form of structural or private abuse of power. The fight against gender-based violence online and offline must be strengthened through European legislation, as well as on the international stage and in multilateral forums such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe or the OSCE and cooperation work. Unfortunately, forced marriage and genital mutilation are still among the practices to be combated in 2024. We want to strengthen the rights of victims across Europe in terms of specialised support and access to justice and protection. All EU member states must ratify the Istanbul Convention.

We are all different and understanding our diversity is crucial in the fight against inequality and discrimination. A feminist Europe must ensure policies that guarantee financial independence from patriarchal structures, by abolishing pay inequalities and tax systems that penalise women. We will implement universal access to childcare, as well as the revision of the Work-Life Balance Directive and the Maternity Directive to progress towards fully paid maternity and paternity leave of equal length.

### **Equal rights for LGBTQIA+**

We are fighting for a world in which we can love who we love and decide freely about our own bodies. Unfortunately, after years of progress, attacks on the rights and dignity of queer people are once again on the rise in Europe. We say no to hate and yes to love and self-determination.

Rainbow families and their rights must be protected throughout the European Union, including the full recognition of parental rights of same-sex couples.

As the European Union, we want to take tough action against reprehensible political developments in Member States such as Italy, where parenthood for same-sex parents has been reversed.

A new LGBTQIA+ equality strategy should ensure that transgender, intersex and non-binary people are also protected by the EU legal framework. We advocate for legal gender recognition based on self-determination and access to trans-specific healthcare. The European Union must work towards an EU-wide ban on so-called "conversion therapy" and forced marriage. The same applies to the forced sterilisation of transgender people and genital mutilation of intersex newborns.

### **A barrier-free Europe**

One in six people in Europe lives with a disability of varying degrees of severity, and the trend is increasing due to an ageing European population. All Member States and the European Union itself have now signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), but there are still too many barriers and common violations of the rights of people with disabilities. The participation of people with disabilities in political and public life must be a central aspect of future European strategies on the rights of people with disabilities. We defend the right of persons with disabilities to vote and stand as candidates in European elections.

In addition, we will implement the creation of a new European Accessibility Agency and the introduction of an EU-wide disability card to ensure mutual recognition of disability status in the Member States. The EU Disability Card must be more than just a passport for tourism and transport, it should also enable people with a disability to study, work or start a new life in a Member State of their choice. In this sense, the EU Disability Card must include a temporary recognition of disability status when moving to another Member State, including the right to assistance.

In addition, we seek an employment and skills guarantee for people with disabilities to promote their participation in the open labour market, as well as the availability and affordability of assistive technologies. The next EU budget must fully support independent living for people with disabilities: closed institutions for people with disabilities should not receive EU funding, instead services to enable independent living and shared living spaces should be supported.

To ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are prioritised and addressed transversally, we advocate the creation of a new department within the European Commission for equality and fundamental rights. We are also in favour of a Disability Committee in the European Parliament and a similar structure in the Council.

## **3. Bringing Europe together with education and culture**

In a world that is changing rapidly and facing multiple challenges, it is more important than ever for Europe to act as a strong, united and forward-looking community. This requires a robust foundation in education, culture and media to promote a vibrant, democratic and sustainable society. These

elements are not only essential building blocks for a dynamic and inclusive Europe, but also crucial for engaging young people in shaping our common future and strengthening European identity in all its diversity.

### **Education as the foundation of a united Europe**

In a united Europe that promotes a diverse, open civil society, a vital economy and a functioning democracy, education is of vital importance. A strong and committed education policy that supports and inspires young people for Europe is the foundation of this approach. Here we underline the importance of programmes such as "Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve" (ALMA) or Erasmus+. The popular Erasmus+ programme should be further expanded and strengthened to give everyone, regardless of their parents' income, the opportunity to study and live abroad. The further promotion of the ALMA programme is crucial to equip EU citizens for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century (technological change, new challenges) and to strengthen the further development of the EU. We will enable a European Voluntary Year at the beginning of a career and after completing it. This will promote exchange within Europe and enable people to give something back to society.

Access to lifelong education for all citizens, whether through training, study, further education or retraining, is essential. The Bologna Process should be further developed and regularly evaluated to make it easier for students to transfer between European universities, promote student mobility and extend existing programmes to trainees.

### **Unlimited freedom of movement with DiscoverEU**

The DiscoverEU programme, a remarkable European Union initiative that offers young people the opportunity to travel across Europe by train for free, is a prime example of promoting European diversity and integration. By providing free train tickets, young people can discover Europe's cultural diversity, make new friends and gain unique experiences. The programme not only contributes to building European awareness and cohesion, but also provides a platform for young people to develop their independence and self-reliance by travelling on their own and exploring unfamiliar places. It is therefore of immense importance to further develop the DiscoverEU programme and offer more young people this unique opportunity of fully enjoying the freedom to travel in the EU and to develop a deeper connection to their European roots.

### **Culture as the foundation of our democracies**

Culture unites us in Europe through traditions and their forms of expression, which are constantly changing. Yet culture is too a fundamental expression of our democratic ideals; it is often avant-garde, controversial, critical and perspicacious. The freedom of artists, often attacked by authoritarian regimes, must be protected from anti-democratic movements. Culture must be given a protective legal framework and strong public support. We are committed to increasing the

Creative Europe programme and facilitating access to it. Within this framework, programmes to promote the sustainability of artistic creation will be brought to the fore.

We will campaign for fair and equitable pay for all artists across Europe. For self-employed artists who work in several countries, we want to make work easier in terms of administrative and financial burdens, both in terms of paying social security contributions and taxes.

Our architectural heritage is an essential part of our culture. Through our cultural heritage, we pass on our history to future generations in a tangible way. The New European Bauhaus programme is an important project that must be supported and further developed. We will also support European initiatives aimed at preserving and restoring world cultural heritage that has been destroyed or is at risk of destruction during global conflicts.

To enable as many people as possible in Europe to participate in cultural offerings, we want to promote the cultural participation of socially disadvantaged people, diversify the funded programmes and ensure gender equality in project funding. We will also campaign for a European cultural passport that enables all young Europeans to benefit from a European cultural programme free of charge and thus discover the culture of all European countries without financial barriers.

### **Free and independent media as a pillar of European society**

Free and independent media are also an essential pillar of European society. The protection of journalistic sources and the prevention of media concentration are crucial for the editorial and economic independence of the media. Investigative journalism needs to be safeguarded through specific measures and the application of EU law should be closely monitored to prevent abuse.

Overall, it is important that education, culture and media are at the center of European policy to promote a diverse and democratic society in Europe that is equipped for the challenges of the future. A society that is well-informed, culturally diverse and grounded in democratic principles can successfully face up to future challenges.

## **4. Institutional reforms for a better Europe**

To tackle the major challenges of our time - from the climate crisis and species extinction to growing social inequalities and challenges to the rule of law within Europe - the European Union must grow, gain more competences and become more efficient in its decision-making processes.

At the Conference on the Future of Europe, which concluded in 2022, thousands of participating European citizens clearly expressed their support for a revision of the treaties. They called for a deepening of European democracy with more powers for the European Parliament, an end to national veto rights, a larger EU budget and stronger EU competences in key areas such as health, tax policy and social protection. We support these proposals and are committed to their

implementation.

### **Open to expansion of the Union**

Our Union remains a promise of peace, justice and prosperity. Many people in the European neighbourhood long to gain EU citizenship and the rights and freedoms that come with it. Because the European Union is built on common values and rules, national borders and rivalries become less important. The enlargement of the EU is therefore the best prospect for lasting peace and security in Europe.

In this respect, the European Union must honour its promises to the candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine. We also support Kosovo's efforts to become a candidate for EU membership. All countries that seek to join or rejoin the European Union and share our values must be welcomed on the path to EU membership and given all the support they need to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria. The European Union must work more closely with civil society in the accession process to minimise feelings of defensiveness towards EU enlargement. The European Union and Member State governments must conduct a broad campaign to educate Europeans about the benefits of an EU expansion, not only from an economic perspective, but also from a social and human perspective, so that the populations of EU Member States can readily accept expansion soon.

The European public should be informed more transparently about the progress of the ongoing accession processes. We support the careful and thorough accession process that has already been initiated by the EU. If the membership criteria are met, accession must not be blocked for unjustified reasons. We will work towards overcoming unanimity in the Council, which currently makes it difficult for new members to join. The admission of new members must also be a decisive impetus for internal reforms that make it easier for the Union to take decisions efficiently and effectively.

### **Expanding democracy in the heart of Europe**

We are in favour of a federal Europe, a supranational democracy that can achieve results. The requirement for unanimity between member states on issues ranging from tax and foreign policy to procedures for the protection of democracy and anti-discrimination is currently preventing the European Union from taking important decisions for the common good and must therefore be reconsidered.

As the only directly elected EU institution, the European Parliament should finally be given the right of initiative for legislative proposals and a full say in budgetary matters. The Council of the European Union should function as a second chamber for EU legislation and not as a place for intergovernmental agreements behind closed doors.

The current EU budget is insufficient to tackle the challenges facing our Union. The EU budget should therefore be significantly increased, including through more own resources such as plastic

tax revenues, while strengthening the role of the European Parliament and civil society in monitoring EU spending. The competences of the European Union should be expanded to ensure that it can fulfil its tasks.

For these much-needed reforms to be implemented, a democratic mandate from citizens is essential. For this reason, an EU-wide, comprehensive process on treaty changes should take place. The treaty changes should then be ratified by a Europe-wide referendum based on a double majority system: a qualified majority of states and most European citizens.

### **Bringing Europe to life with citizen participation**

Political participation strengthens the European Union. EU elections must become more accessible, including for people with disabilities. To simplify democratic participation, we are in favour of online voting for the EU elections from 2029. In addition to the national lists, transnational lists should be introduced for the European Parliament to create an additional EU-wide constituency and strengthen the sense of European unity. We also believe that the EU must work towards lowering the voting age. We are in favour of EU-wide voting rights from the age of 16 in European elections.

Democracy is more than just elections; European civil society must be more involved in the decision-making process. To make EU policy more inclusive and livelier, we would like to set up permanent citizens' councils that provide feedback on current EU policy and impetus for future projects at regular intervals. Projects such as the Conference on the Future of Europe are interesting approaches that need to be promoted more often. However, for citizen participation to fulfil its purpose, there must be a commitment on the part of decision-makers to consider the proposals of civil society. In addition, it is crucial to involve the younger generations more in shaping the EU. Structured dialogues on European decisions with youth organizations should take place regularly at national and European level.

Petitions are already an important instrument of citizen participation, but they are still too rarely listened to. The legal framework for European petitions and the European Citizens' Initiative in particular must therefore be strengthened. In the case of successful European Citizens' Initiatives, i.e. those that have collected over one million signatures from at least seven Member States, the European Commission should be obliged to actually submit legislative proposals. In addition, a framework for EU-wide referendums should be introduced.

### **More transparency in the European decision-making process**

Transparency in the European decision-making process is important to strengthen Europeans' trust in the European Union and to fulfil the democratic accountability of national governments. In many votes of the European Parliament, you can already check exactly how the individual MEPs voted. However, European citizens also have a right to be informed about what their national governments decide at European level.

It is currently difficult to understand how decisions are made in the Council and almost impossible to find out how the individual member states position themselves. This needs to change soon. We are in favour of greater transparency on the part of the Council. The positions of the various member states should be published for all decisions made by the member states, including the various administrative and expert committees that decide on the authorisation of chemical substances, for example.

### **Zero tolerance for corruption!**

Citizens' trust in democracy is based on political integrity. Transparency and accountability are therefore essential for democratic control and public trust. Corruption and abuse of the EU budget threaten the entire European project and must be resolutely combated.

The Qatargate scandal within the European Parliament has shown that the EU institutions are not able to prevent corruption and massive misbehaviour. There will perhaps always be people with criminal tendencies, but we must deter them with clear rules on transparency and avoiding conflicts of interest, as well as strict sanctions for misbehaviour.

The EU institutions need an independent ethics authority with the necessary powers and resources to investigate and sanction unethical behaviour and abuse of office. We need comprehensive legislation on lobbying activities at EU level, including a mandatory EU transparency register. We support the bodies responsible for protecting the EU's financial interests, OLAF and the European Public Prosecutor's Office, and will implement more resources to fight corruption.

## **D. A union of peace, security and global justice**

We support the European Union's endeavours to play a leading role in global politics by working for peace, stability, human rights, democracy and an inclusive society.

We stand for a Union that is self-confident on the world stage and speaks with one voice. Only if we are united can we effectively assert ourselves against unfreedom and war, defend our interests and values, fend off external influence, shape the future and peace - and make a tangible improvement to people's lives. This Europe offers an urgently needed counter-offer to the influence of China and Russia in particular.

### **1. Fair and sustainable international trade**

Trade for trade's sake is not our philosophy. The principle of "people and the environment before profit" also applies to us internationally. The green and just transition must go beyond the borders



of the EU. We live in an increasingly globalised world and are therefore depending on each other. With this in mind, our international trade relations should be fair and sustainable to ensure that we have a positive impact both inside and outside Europe.

Our international trade system currently has a negative impact not only on the climate, but also on human rights around the world. We believe in a global trading system that is based on justice, that shapes globalisation for the better and that puts people and nature at the centre, preventing their exploitation.

We will continue to oppose free trade agreements that are not in line with our environmental and human rights standards, have little economic added value and jeopardise small and medium- sized enterprises in the EU (e.g. Mercosur).

Companies operating in the European market must respect labour law, human rights and environmental standards throughout their supply chain, regardless of where production takes place. We fought hard for the adoption of the EU Supply Chain Directive in the last mandate and will continue to campaign for the swift adoption and full implementation of this directive.

### **International trade that is mindful of the environment**

To make international trade more environmentally friendly, it is important that the EU only concludes trade agreements with countries that implement the Paris Agreement and other international agreements on climate and biodiversity protection.

Sustainable partnerships and the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) can create fair competition by making decarbonisation and environmental protection a joint effort. For CBAM to be effective and fair, this system must be complemented by increased EU spending on climate action in low-income countries. We will push to improve bilateral trade and investment agreements with binding and sanctionable sustainability clauses. Sustainability goals must be anchored horizontally in all chapters of trade agreements, from raw materials and agriculture to procurement.

Over the period of our last mandate, we finally successfully introduced European legislation on due diligence, deforestation and forced labour supply chains. This legislation guarantees high standards for imports into the EU. We will ensure that these ambitious regulations are actually implemented.

We are also committed to reorganising the global system of intellectual property rights to ensure that the "Global South" has access to key technologies, including in the areas of health and decarbonisation.

### **Human rights are non-negotiable**

The respect of human rights should be the focal point of impact assessments for future trade

agreements should . The precautionary principle must be fully respected and full compliance with the standards of the International Labour Organisation must be a prerequisite for any agreement. Greater parliamentary involvement and full transparency during negotiations on trade agreements should ensure democratic legitimacy as well as the involvement of civil society and trade unions.

We will push for strategies to integrate fair trade principles into key EU policies on production, consumption and trade, to promote living incomes and wages, to include small farmers, artisans and labourers in decision-making and to support measures to reduce pesticide use in third party countries. We will ensure that companies adopt sustainable purchasing practices and promote mission-driven business models to ensure that there is no exploitation in supply chains.

### **Common good of the international community over private interests**

Trade rules should neither hinder climate protection nor limit our ability to take social and environmental action. On the contrary, trade must be part of our efforts to limit emissions, switch to net-zero technologies and end environmental degradation. Trade in sustainable goods and services should be facilitated so that they are affordable for everyone at all times.

In this context, we are fighting to put an end to investments in fossil fuels and incentivise sustainable investments instead. We welcome the European withdrawal from the climate-destroying Energy Charter Treaty. All future investment agreements must fully respect the right to regulate. We are in favour of abolishing investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms and replacing them with a multilateral legal system.

## **2. A humane asylum and immigration policy**

Migration and asylum policy have become central issues in European politics in recent years. Europe's history is characterised by internal and external migration movements, which have contributed significantly to the continent's diverse culture and wealth. The free movement of labour and the dismantling of borders are essential components of European integration. In this context, we are in favour of safeguarding the human rights of asylum seekers and open borders, to foster a feeling of belonging among people, especially the young.

It is essential that our asylum and immigration policy remains humane. We are committed to protecting people fleeing war, hunger, persecution and violence. Europe is the only common solution to migration issues. Europe should offer legal escape routes and immigration opportunities and ensure that asylum seekers are treated with dignity by combating the causes of flight instead of refugees and ending the deaths in the Mediterranean. Climate refugees - people fleeing their homes due to unbearable climate conditions - must also have the right to asylum.

In view of demographic change and the shortage of skilled labour, Europe must also enable people

without high qualifications to immigrate. A European immigration law, based on the UN migration pact, should establish common rules for the safe and legal immigration of people with different levels of qualifications and their families.

### **Patrolling external borders - Yes. Fortress Europe – No**

If we want to prevent people from embarking on dangerous and life-threatening escape routes, legal escape routes must be created through programmes such as the UNHCR's resettlement programme. Nevertheless, effective control of the EU's external borders and the humane registration of arriving people are necessary to ensure a humane asylum policy. We consider the reorganisation of the EU asylum authority to be necessary for a better coordinated approach to the protection of human rights. What we cannot and will not accept are cuts to the fundamental rights of people who are fleeing and seeking protection. EU-funded detention centres at European borders are not a solution. Detaining people for months in detention-like conditions at the border does not correspond to our idea of a dignified asylum policy.

We note with regret that the Member States of the European Union cannot agree on a common solution to migration based on genuine solidarity and not on financial compensation. We strongly support the continuation of discussions on European reception quotas, and if the EU states cannot agree on a common, fair distribution of refugees within the Union, we believe that the willing states should lead the way. In order to support them and other bodies, we will ensure that funding from a municipal integration fund can also be allocated to municipalities and regions that take in refugees so that those affected can migrate with dignity.

Instead of fighting the people fleeing their home countries, the EU must combat the root causes of their plight. In addition to conflicts, human rights violations, poverty and hunger, the consequences of the climate crisis are also increasingly triggering migration. In the coming years, global warming, caused by the massive greenhouse gas emissions of industrialised nations, will have a devastating impact on the Global South and developing countries in particular.

### **Humane intake of refugees and refugee camps in which human rights are respected.**

We believe that, despite the considerable efforts made by the European Union, further steps must be taken to improve the intake and living conditions of migrants as well as the general situation of migrants at a European level. Many migrants are fleeing war, hunger, persecution or violence from their home countries. Depending on the reasons for their flight, a considerable number of migrants suffer from post-traumatic stress caused by traumatic events. We need to strengthen psychological and social support for migrants who want it, as well as for those in refugee camps, by providing earmarked grants for psychological services provided by NGOs. In addition, efforts against the overcrowding and deterioration of refugee camps in certain regions remain an absolute priority for the EU. The EU should step up its efforts and engage more in cooperation with NGOs and local governments to improve the living conditions of refugees by reaffirming the rights and obligations of NGOs involved in refugee assistance and promoting the importance of socio-educational programmes. In particular, to ensure living conditions that respect human dignity in accordance

with Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to improve the deplorable living conditions of migrants in these camps, the EU should establish an independent inspection body. However, this body should not interfere with the inspection work of existing NGOs, but should have the purpose of visiting refugee camps and detention centres to check whether the conditions there comply with human rights. In addition, transparency regarding sanitary and living conditions in detention centres supported by the EU should be increased.

### **Making positive use of the potential of migration**

As Luxembourgers, we understand that migration is also a great opportunity for diversity and prosperity. Migrants should be given the chance to build a good life here in complete freedom, without being left behind in a bureaucratic no-man's land.

A new migration code should provide visas for family reunification and work visas for different skill levels and allow migrants to change their status at any time. Furthermore, in small Luxembourg, we know that access to education, language support and job opportunities is crucial for the integration of newcomers.

In order to prevent the exploitation of migrant workers, access to justice must be guaranteed in all EU countries and a comprehensive campaign should be launched to legalise long-term "sans-papiers" in EU countries. It is also important to combat the precarious labour conditions that migrants often suffer from. In addition to the consistent application of EU directives, the establishment of complaints centres for whistleblowers and victims of exploitation is necessary.

## **3. Europe and its responsibility in the world**

We support the European Union's ambition to work towards a fairer, more sustainable, democratic and international community in our neighbouring countries and in the world. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has made it clear that peace, freedom, security and human rights cannot be taken for granted. They must be constantly defended and strengthened. International tensions are increasing not only in Ukraine, but worldwide. China is acting in an increasingly authoritarian manner and is calling the rules-based international order into question. Our relationship with the United States is volatile at best and particularly tense in the economic sphere. In Africa, Asia and South America, states and societies are calling for an equal say at international negotiating tables and are demanding compensation for the economic and environmental damage caused by the West. However, in many places they are simultaneously struggling with internal conflicts and the renewed rise of authoritarian regimes. Long-term peace in the Middle East remains a key issue in our foreign policy.

### **Creating a feminist and climate-friendly EU foreign policy**

The changes in the global power structure pose challenges for the EU. In addition to the effects of the pandemic, inflation, sovereign debt and the climate crisis, it is once again becoming clear that in order to protect peace in Europe and make Europe more secure globally, we must join forces. Only together can we make a difference on the world stage. The European Community, followed by the Union, has proven time and again that it can stand up for peace, security and the rule of law internationally.

The Union has shown by its own example that peace can be learned, stabilised and shaped for the benefit of all. That is hope in difficult times: A self-confident EU on the world stage, speaking with one voice, can assert itself against repression and war, defend our interests and values, fend off external influence and significantly improve people's lives. This Europe offers prospects for political and economic development worldwide and thus represents an urgently needed counter-offer to the influence of countries such as China and Russia.

A feminist foreign policy remains of central importance to us. Societies prove to be much more peaceful, prosperous and secure when all people are given the opportunity to participate in political, social and economic life. We therefore continue to demand equal representation in international bodies, negotiating delegations and greater representation of women in EU politics.

The European Union must take a leading role, not only in security and peace policy, but also in the fight against the climate crisis and for global justice. Climate diplomacy and the promotion of green technologies are crucial for a sustainable future. We are committed to ensuring that the EU strengthens its geopolitical and economic security through renewable energy and thus acts as a united force in the fight against climate change.

### **The European community of values and peace, beyond the borders of the EU**

Today, we see international peace jeopardised by conflicts in the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Sahel and now the European continent, among others.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, in particular, marks a historic turning point for Europe, undermining international law and international security. This emphasises the need for undivided solidarity with Ukraine and support for its struggle for freedom and accession to the European Union once the criteria for accession have been met.

Because we stand for a peaceful future, in prosperity and democracy, in Europe and beyond. A clear neighbourhood policy emphasises the importance of a strong European Union that acts as a global force for peace, stability, human rights and environmental protection.

Europe is therefore facing numerous challenges today. The European Union must step up its efforts to strengthen human rights and minimum standards in its neighbourhood. Partnerships with countries such as Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are an essential part of this effort to

support modernisation and democratisation in these neighbouring countries. A good partnership with the EU's eastern neighbours is an important building block for stability and peace in the region.

Despite the attack by Russia in violation of international law, any democratic upsurges from civil society in countries such as Russia must not be ignored and deserve our support. Activists who risk their well-being to fight for democracy, transparency and peace should be able to find protection in the EU.

This is exactly how the EU should continue to support democratic and pro-European forces in countries like Turkey. We hope that Turkey can make the turnaround back to democracy and the rule of law as soon as possible so that serious accession negotiations can be resumed. As things stand today, Turkey has little chance of joining the European Union. Nevertheless, Turkish pro-European movements deserve an open and honest dialogue and our support.

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we continue to advocate a peaceful two-state solution to ensure Israel's security and the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state. We stand with the Palestinian and Israeli victims of the conflict and support the investigation of possible war crimes by the International Criminal Court and other independent bodies.

#### **4. Security policy: Together against crime and terror**

Recent events, in particular Russia's attack on Ukraine in violation of international law, have significantly worsened the security situation in Europe and mark a turning point in recent history.

This tragic event, which continues to have an impact to this day, opposes everything we stand for. At the centre of our policy is human security, which includes the defence of liberal democratic principles, international law and human rights.

##### **The EU as a strong, independent voice in the world**

We advocate greater autonomy for the EU in the area of security and defence in order to be able to manage future crises better and more independently. This includes the call for the development of rapid European intervention forces and greater co-operation between EU member states in the procurement and use of military equipment. At the same time, there is a need for the European Union to invest more in research and development in the field of defence. This is of strategic importance in order to achieve greater autonomy and independence from non-EU countries.

Despite significant spending in the defence sector, the military capabilities of EU member states lag far behind those of some non-EU countries. This discrepancy underlines the urgency of prioritising innovation and technological development. This increased cooperation, as well as a focus on research and development in the defence sector, is an essential step in securing Europe's

independence and influence on the world stage.

The regulation of artificial intelligence in the area of defence in accordance with international standards and ethical guidelines must also be prioritized . For us, it is clear that machines should not be allowed to make life and death decisions.

In our understanding of defence policy, the use of military force must nevertheless be seen as a last resort. The EU should strengthen its diplomatic role as a mediator in conflicts and act as an alliance for peace through cooperation worldwide. In this way, Europe also protects and strengthens the security and freedom of its citizens.

In our opinion, a perspicacious, holistic security policy that focuses on the prevention and civilian management of crises and conflicts is essential. This plays a key role in combating the root causes of displacement by promoting strong local structures and functioning state institutions and thus protecting human rights.

### **More co-operation for intra-European security**

Holistic security does not only encompass areas that can have a direct impact on everyday life in a society. For example, it is extremely important that the EU focuses on increasing cyber security and combating targeted disinformation campaigns and troll attacks. These are both areas that are increasingly subject to cyber attacks. The EU must therefore position itself better against the increasing number of attacks on critical infrastructures, as well as increasing attempts to influence fact-based reporting in Europe. To this end, we will increase the number of competent authorities and strengthen the relevant infrastructures.

Transparency and the fight against money laundering, terrorist financing and tax evasion are further concerns. We will champion at the European level a regulation on access to the national registers of beneficial owners. We are also in favour of expanding the powers and resources of the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

Even the EU is not free from organised crime. It harms our democracies, disrupts peaceful coexistence and jeopardises human lives. As organised crime is transnational, it can only be combated through increased European cooperation. We support measures that improve the flow of information between European police and intelligence services and create a European exchange programme for police officers. Nevertheless, we caution against automatic data collection, as we believe it jeopardises the right to privacy of all citizens, including those who have nothing to be accused of.

We also support transnational cooperation in the fight against terrorism, as long as this also takes place with respect for the fundamental rights of all people.

## **Adhere to fundamental rights**

We express our respect to police authorities across Europe for their service in the name of protecting European citizens. It is important that individual EU Member States provide their authorities with effective, proportionate, transparent and democratic legitimised means to carry out their work. This applies to both the digital and non-digital space. The civil liberties of citizens must be permanently protected, as no one in the European Union is above the law, not even the police and other security authorities.

In order to protect the rights of minorities who are disproportionately at risk of police violence and profiling, the EU Equal Treatment Directive should be updated to explicitly cover police violence and institutional violence, should it occur.

In the face of increasing threats to the right to demonstrate in some EU countries, we will continue to defend the right to assemble and demonstrate peacefully in accordance with international and European law.