

Political demands 2019/20

Think European, act and govern democratically!

[Resolution of the European Movement Germany General Assembly on 24 June 2019](#)

70 years after the foundation of European Movement Germany (EM Germany) we are reflecting gratefully on 70 years of peace in large parts of Europe. We must now look to new challenges and perspectives of the European Union, to the next 30 years!

In the European Parliament elections in May 2019, more citizens exercised their right to vote than in 2014, thus making an active contribution to European citizenship. European democracy is not, however, only relevant once every five years in the European elections, but is a feature of everyday life in democratic associations and societies. After all, “small-scale democracy” improves citizens’ understanding of and level of involvement in politics at all levels. It supports the cohesion of our society in the European institutions.

However, the European Parliament elections have also highlighted that authoritarian and nationalist forces are becoming increasingly strong in many parts of Europe. It must be the task of pro-European decision-makers to regain trust and promote effective participation opportunities in order to ensure that civil society is active. Pluralist democracy must be promoted at all levels, half-truths and anti-European disinformation must be uncovered and independent reporting promoted across borders. After the European elections, the parliamentarisation of the Union must be continued consistently. In order to do this, we need a right of initiative for the European Parliament and a comprehensive reform of electoral law.

Democratic Europe means a Europe characterised by rule of law and civil and human rights. The values of the European Union must not remain merely values that are written down in treaties, but must be lived values that can be put into practice accordingly. The Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 must be more strongly focused on the policy requirements of the next decade. It must be geared to the global political situation, promote sustainable development and economic innovation and improve the social situation in Europe.

The cornerstones of the European Union and the single market are the four fundamental freedoms as well as the Schengen area, which are still challenged by temporary border controls at the EU’s internal borders. Border controls in the Schengen area must be stopped as a matter of urgency and countries must work together to protect external EU borders. This is the only way to ensure seamless cultural exchange and full freedom of movement.

National solo efforts must be overcome in order to work together to take steps to strengthen the fiscal, banking and economic and currency union on the basis of the social market economy.

As part of its Presidency of the Council of the European Union from July 2020, the German Federal Government will have the valuable opportunity of shaping the EU agenda and making pluralist democracy, the rule of law and civil and human rights the central issues of its six-month Council Presidency. The Federal Government must internalise the principle that

“European policy is domestic policy and domestic policy is European policy”, make its coordination inclusive as well as more effective and promote a structured Europe-wide dialogue by means of “European Public Diplomacy”.

Our Europe is a Europe of democracy, pluralism, the rule of law, civil and human rights and freedom. EM Germany’s 70th anniversary is driving us forward to strengthen this Europe and to work to promote its future development.

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Respect European values and fundamental rights

The European Union is a community of values based on fundamental and human rights. This includes the reflection on the shared European history and the responsibility to preserve peace in Europe and worldwide. The values laid down as binding in the Treaty on European Union and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union only contribute to this if they are applied and promoted in all member states by the judiciary and administration as provided for in Article 51 TEU.

Matters of vital importance are respect for human dignity, democracy, freedom, equality, pluralism, free teaching, solidarity, freedom of the press, religion and opinion, the rule of law, the “polluter pays” principle and the precautionary principle, the principle of integration as well as respect for human and minority rights. Dialogue and cooperation can only succeed on the basis of these shared values and beliefs.

However, these values can only be firmly anchored in a democratic society in which diverse civic involvement is protected and promoted. Only values that are lived are strong values. Only together can we represent our values in a manner that is credible and compelling. In the event of identifiable violations of the values set out in the Treaty on European Union, the European Commission and the Federal Government must make use of all opportunities and social contacts to promote compliance with these values in the EU member states.

Future candidate countries have the task of strengthening democratic forces and their competition with each other, while ensuring that European values are upheld. In particular, they must comply with the Copenhagen criteria in full, especially with regard to the fight against corruption.

We demand:

- **9 May should be established as a shared European holiday in the EU to provide citizens with an active day of celebration of European values and free democratic order.**
- **The European Union and its institutions as well as member state and non-state actors must make a stronger and more targeted effort to uphold and promote European values and fundamental rights in the member states and candidate countries.**
- **The EU institutions must consistently apply the rule of law mechanism (Article 7 TEU). The next Multiannual Financial Framework should also explore the scope for financial sanctions or the award of cohesion funds managed by the EU Commission linked to compliance with the rule of law.**
- **In accession negotiations, the chapters concerning the rule of law and democracy (in particular Chapters 23 and 24) should be negotiated as a matter of priority. If necessary, the accession negotiations (or pre-accession assistance for potential candidate countries) should be frozen. In this context, the right of action should also be guaranteed for all natural and legal persons that are directly and personally affected by measures.**

- **The EU should urgently resume work on the Accession Convention to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and work towards a timely accession to the ECHR.**
- **In the course of a possible reform of the EU Treaties, the member states should be able to refer possible infringements to the European Court of Justice in order to preserve our common values.**

Strengthen European democracy and the parliamentary system

Democracy concerns us all, at all levels and in all parts of society! In many member states, confidence in politics, and therefore in democracy, is declining. Political and state actors must regain trust at all levels. Paying lip service to democracy, parliamentarianism and public participation is not enough.

At a time when emancipation, freedom and human rights are being called into question by many governments, including in Europe, the European Union must safeguard what it has achieved and retain its shaping force. Focusing only on the internal market is not enough: Freedom, democracy and a “European social market economy” belong together.

The responsibility for a democratic Europe lies not only with the EU institutions and the member states, but also with representative associations and other social forces. In addition to structured dialogue, we need effective participation opportunities to ensure that civil society is active. This is expressed in strong social partners, representative associations and federations.

Cross-border cooperation between organisations, but also between local and regional authorities and joint representation organisations, such as the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), continues to be of great importance for European democracy. The European Citizens’ Initiative (ECI), which should be further developed in close cooperation with the European Parliament and extended to the other European Treaties, can also play a positive role here.

A democratic European Union must constantly work to improve its institutions. The European Parliament, as the only EU institution directly legitimised by the citizens, is at the centre of this process and needs a right of initiative, be it by means of interinstitutional agreements or treaty amendments. The enforcement of a candidate endorsed by Parliament for the Presidency of the Commission makes it clear that the Commission is responsible to Parliament and emphasises its role as a representative of the people. More efficiency could be achieved through the personal union of the President of the European Council and the Commission. More decisions in the Council should be taken by qualified majority. In fiscal and foreign policy decisions in particular, this would make the EU more capable of action and less blocked by the particular interests of individual member states. Democracy, efficiency and transparency must also be guaranteed at member state level.

With a view to the European elections in 2024, the lead candidate (“Spitzenkandidaten”) principle must be strengthened and further developed by more coherent party families. Transnational lists should be introduced and cross-border constituencies should be seriously discussed. General exclusion from elections of citizens under guardianship is contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and must be abolished throughout the EU. Recommendations on the introduction of alternative electoral methods to abolish electoral barriers for people with disabilities are to be implemented.

The European Union must focus on the questions that will provide the best solutions for the citizens of Europe and in areas where it has the necessary capacity for action. Subsidiarity must be respected, but it is not a one-way street. Member states must, if necessary, transfer competencies to the European level. The democratic participation of European regions and national parliaments in European policy must be strengthened.

In order to achieve a more effective European Union, both reforms within the European Treaties and Treaty amendments are necessary. The “Convention method” ensures the greatest possible involvement of social forces and the public. Structured representative consultations with citizens provide important orientation for policy-makers.

Communication on European policy and politics must be target group-oriented and multilingual. Citizens can only identify with a European democracy and actively shape it if they are informed in a manner that is comprehensible.

Civil dialogues can be an important instrument if they are democratically inclusive, results-oriented and not PR-oriented. Citizens must be able to give important impetus to decision-makers and interest groups.

We demand:

- **The Federal government and governments of the German states must work to ensure that the “United Europe” anchored in basic law remains alive and capable of majority support among the population in the sense of pluralistic democracy. Democratic decision-making processes in society, e.g. in associations and societies (“small-scale democracy”), strengthen understanding of and involvement in politics at all levels.**
- **The European Parliament, as the only EU institution directly legitimised by the citizens, must be the centre for parliamentary democratic legislation and have a right of initiative.**
- **Parliament and Council must introduce a coherent EU electoral system with transnational lists by 2024, which promotes the democratic development and constitution of European parties and establishes the voting age from 16 years.**
- **In cooperation with as many member states as possible, the Federal Government should initiate reform initiatives for democracy in the EU and promote broad public debate. For the improvement of democracy and its capacity for action in Europe, amendments to the EU Treaties must not be ruled out.**

Strengthen pluralism throughout Europe

The digitalisation of the media landscape and the interactive use of social media have fundamentally changed communication. They have facilitated and democratised access to information. At the same time, however, the possibilities for abuse and manipulation have also grown.

Communication that is differentiated at an early stage, open dialogue and democratic competition are effective means against the loss of confidence in politics, also on a cross-border European level. Democratically legitimised political actors and social groups must strengthen each other across all levels and be present in every public space, whether on the street or on the internet.

Press freedom in Europe is currently being reduced, also in comparison with other regions in the world. The presence of authoritarian and nationalist parties in governments often leads to increased media concentration throughout the EU because they apply strong economic and political pressure on media. Anti-media rhetoric and a reduction in the independence of broadcasting are increasingly becoming part of political strategy. It is now more important than ever to clearly identify attacks on freedom of the press and, where necessary, to improve the framework conditions for free press. Platforms on which misinformation is disseminated must be held accountable throughout Europe. All sides must be committed to taking action against disinformation.

Only high-quality journalism can respond to misinformation on the internet. In this regard, the work of non-partisan public-service media plays an important role. Since they do not have to gear their reporting exclusively with respect to economic success, they strengthen quality and diversity of opinion. A European network of public-service media could strengthen a European communication space, collate forces against anti-pluralist actors and promote a European public sphere. Cross-border services in terms of historical education, cultural reporting as well as political formats on current topics are necessary. ARTE TV can serve as an example here.

We demand:

- **The Federal Government and the institutions of the European Union must resolutely promote pluralist democracy at all levels.**
- **In order to strengthen media pluralism and media quality, the European Union should set up an independent support fund for investigative journalism in order to promote the independence of reporting across borders.**
- **Independent public-service media must be contractually secured and linked together under the self-commitment of the highest standards of journalism. They should develop and offer joint news, education and documentation services via a common Europe-wide platform.**

Strengthen European awareness: involve young people, educate Europe

Education is the foundation of an informed European society in which solidarity, democracy and diversity are lived. Education begins in kindergarten, continues at school and is a lifelong process that includes all generations and goes far beyond formal education. Political education is an essential building block on the path to a common, democratic Europe and requires the engagement and sensitisation of all those active in the education system. The European Pillar of Social Rights, proclaimed in 2017, creates a universal right to education. This must now be implemented in the member states together with the entire pillar of social rights.

EM Germany therefore welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a "European Education Area", providing for closer cooperation between the member states in education policy. Knowledge and understanding of one's neighbours and the European community are central elements of European education and must be integrated into a core curriculum. The idea of a shared text book, for example for history lessons, must be realised. German-French and German-Polish history books exist. This can be used as a starting point. In addition to formal education, non-formal and informal education must not be neglected, as these are also basic prerequisites for active citizenship.

EM Germany would like accessibility of all educational opportunities for all, including disadvantaged groups, to be a particular focal point because educational success and social background are all too often closely linked. The development of political education to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills about the EU and democratic processes is just as important. A challenge in the educational field is education and further training, where there is a particular need for sensitisation for existing and future digitisation processes. Successful participation in social developments and secure career prospects depend on digital participation to a large extent. These include barrier-free access to digital media as well as nationwide and low-threshold services for acquiring basic IT skills. We see this as a contribution to counteracting the increasing digital divide in our society.

The Erasmus+ programme has proved to be an effective tool for intercultural education and European youth exchanges. In order to promote exchange within the EU, the financial framework of Erasmus+ needs to be significantly increased in the context of the MFF negotiations, in line with the high demand. Furthermore, Erasmus+ participation opportunities need to be consistently developed. Bonus systems for discounted travel do not replace an educational programme. A multilateral youth exchange with the support of experienced educational institutions is more effective. Municipalities, German states and the Federal Government are also called upon to promote European education.

A united Europe is no longer a project for young people; it is the reality of the lives of young people. It is crucial to give young people the opportunity to play their part in shaping Europe and to promote enthusiasm for the European idea. This includes developing access to education for young people.

Many non-formal educational formats impart important social and intercultural competencies and skills. Youth work and voluntary services in particular must therefore remain independent of the

labour market. At the same time, the member states must step up their efforts to combat youth unemployment with suitable programmes. A fair and equitable economic and social order, which has Europe and not only the member states in mind, can make an essential contribution to this.

Those who want to ensure citizens are committed and responsible must open up opportunities for participation at an early stage. Democratic youth organisations are particularly well placed to provide young people with comprehensive knowledge and skills to actively participate in shaping the EU. They therefore need structural support. If the current generation grows up to see their interests not being represented, this would have serious consequences for the future of the European Union.

The Council of Europe is still at the forefront of youth participation. In view of the impending departure of Russia, the budget for the youth sector is now to be cut completely. Particularly in countries where independent youth organisations are under severe political pressure, the Council of Europe is often the only partner that makes educational and exchange work possible. This work is important and must be intensified.

We demand:

- **The EU must guarantee equal educational opportunities for children, young people and adults in all member states. Political and digital education must also be expanded and promoted outside schools, Erasmus+ must be strengthened and the supporting landscape must be involved with a co-management mechanism.**
- **Against the background of nationalist tendencies in Europe, democratically organised social forces must be promoted and structurally strengthened. Therefore, there should be a bonus for youth organisations with democratic constitutions when allocating funds from public budgets and/or EU programmes.**
- **With a view to the forthcoming German Presidency of the Council of the EU, it is particularly important to organise binding youth participation with an influence on concrete EU legislation. The six-monthly EU Youth Conference must be an important instrument to advance the implementation of the EU youth goals and to develop the EU youth dialogue.**
- **The governments of German states must anchor basic knowledge about the European Union and European integration in the curricula in all types of schools and in university education. The importance of the EU decision-making level for many areas of private and public life, the EU's capacity for action, its decision-making system as well as its values and fundamental freedoms must be communicated.**
- **The Council of Europe must be strengthened and supported as an institution. The member states of the Council of Europe must work to ensure that the youth section remains an equal component and that financial support is not cut, but rather increased by 10%, in order to manage the possibility of Russia's impending withdrawal.**

Continue pioneering: equality at all levels

In many cases, European law has been an important driving force at national level. Initially via the Court of Justice of the European Union, which, via its case law, helped women gain access to professions that had previously been male-dominated, to successfully demand equal pay and equal working conditions and to effectively defend themselves against discrimination.

The EU must again actively take up this pioneering role. In terms of primary law, there is an adequate set of instruments available for this purpose, which must be used: Articles 2 and 3(2) TEU, Article 8 TFEU and Articles 23 and 33(2) Charter of Fundamental Rights constitute the primary legal basis for gender equality. Article 157(3) TFEU provides a legal basis for legislative activities ranging from meaningful coordination to the necessary harmonisation in the ordinary legislative procedure, as shown by the Directive (2006/54) on gender equality in employment. Article 153(1) lit. i TFEU can be used as a legal basis to clarify that only minimum requirements are to be regulated, which member states may go beyond of, as in the case of the recently adopted Compatibility Directive. In addition, Article 19 TFEU can also be used as a legal basis, such as in the case of the Directive (2004/113) on gender equality in the access to and supply of goods and services.

Gender equality must be an essential element in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The directive on work-life balance offers only the first welcome approaches and must be developed further in an ambitious manner. Member states in particular are responsible for implementing directives by the deadlines. The issue of gender equality should be linked to the European Semester/Europe 2020.

Women are affected by violence more often than men. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) has been in force since 2014 and has been ratified in Germany since 1 February 2018. Adequate implementation is now needed.

For over ten years, the EU's 5th anti-discrimination directive, which aims to promote equality at all levels, has been blocked in the Council of Ministers. Legislative procedures that grant protection against discrimination to minorities beyond the sphere of employment are also blocked by the Federal Government.

People with disabilities are more likely to not have a vocational qualification, are more likely to be unemployed or seeking work and are more likely to be at risk of poverty. Since 2018, the European Union and all its member states have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and are obliged to remove these obstacles to equality. This requires concrete implementation steps.

We demand:

- **With regard to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the topic of gender equality must be included in the new Strategic Agenda of the European Union so that implementation can be tackled with enthusiasm over the next five years, both**

legislatively and through cooperation between the EU and the member states in the European Semester/Europe 2020 Strategy and its successor.

- The top positions in the EU must be filled on a gender equal basis.
- The new EU Commission is to develop a new and ambitious EU equality strategy for women and men that goes beyond the points of “equal pay for equal work and work of equal value” and “better reconciliation of private life and work”. It must ensure that existing EU legislation on equality between women and men is translated into reality by the member states. This equality must be reflected in all fields of EU policy.
- By fully implementing its obligations under the Istanbul Convention, the Federal Government must send a clear signal in opposition to violence against women and girls. It must withdraw its reservations regarding the Istanbul Convention and unconditionally grant protection to all women who need help in Germany.
- The new Commission should develop a 2020-2030 equality strategy for people with disabilities along the lines of the 2010-2020 strategy. It is essential to have reliable data on the situations of people with disabilities in Europe. The new legislation on accessibility of goods and services must be implemented by the member states.
- The Federal Government must abandon its fundamental reservation against the 5th anti-discrimination directive and the General Equal Treatment Directive and, together with the other member states, improve protection against discrimination for all citizens and improve its general equality policy.

Social and economic convergence strengthen competitiveness and innovative capacity

Nationalism and economic protectionism are not a path to prosperity and security. The EU therefore stands for openness of economies and for the objective of convergence of living conditions in the member states. A key success of European integration is the four fundamental freedoms: the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital. These freedoms are the cornerstones of European politics. Although employment increased in 2018 and unemployment fell in the EU member states, there are still significant differences within and between EU member states. Despite a better overall economic situation, income disparities within and between EU member states are only narrowing slowly. Such differences jeopardise the acceptance and political legitimacy of the EU.

The social dimension of European integration should be strengthened within the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) that was proclaimed in 2017. The social dimension of the EU should be further developed on the basis of a common commitment and defined responsibilities. Orientation towards the goals of growth and employment is imperative in order to show citizens opportunities, create good jobs, reduce inequality and poverty and thus improve the social situation. Employees' rights on a strong European legal basis must also be a part of this "social dimension" of the European Union. This includes, for example, a common unit for monitoring and enforcing EU regulations and for labour mobility. This legal basis should be binding for all actors. The federal government's initiative to transpose the EU framework for minimum wages and basic social security systems into national policy is to be welcomed. The EPSR should be brought to life in the form of a binding European social agenda.

Fundamental social rights are inextricably linked to civil and political rights and therefore also require particular strategic attention. There is a need for fiscal policy to be consistently geared towards sustainability, growth and employment as well as for continued support by means of an appropriate monetary policy, of reforms in member states and of ambitious and modern innovation policies. Such a policy, geared to the goals of sustainable politics, therefore also promotes the further consolidation of public budgets.

Young people have suffered disproportionately from the economic and financial crisis. The European Union must counteract the very high and long-lasting youth unemployment in many southern European countries, for example by intensifying its structural and investment policy. InvestEU could be expanded for this purpose. Integration and educational opportunities must be consistently expanded. This must be a priority in the 2021-27 MFF negotiations. Digitisation and energy system transformation are also changing the labour market. Regions in which employees and companies are facing such profound structural change must be supported throughout Europe by means of industrial and social policy investments.

We demand:

- **In order to promote growth in line with sustainable development objectives and create new jobs, decision-makers at national and European levels need to implement smart investments in education, research and social infrastructure as well as the necessary structural reforms throughout the European Union.**
- **The common goal in Europe must be to combat youth unemployment and to create skilled jobs for all young people quickly on an unbureaucratic and permanent basis. Work must provide employees with a lifestyle that ensures their livelihood and sustainable personal and professional planning.**
- **National egoisms must be overcome in order to take joint steps to deepen the fiscal, banking, economic and monetary union on the basis of the social market economy. We call for the introduction of EU-wide, minimum assurance standards as part of the reform of the Economic and Monetary Union to strengthen social cohesion and upward convergence because better living and working conditions in the European Union are essential for economic sustainability and political stability.**
- **The principles and rights set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights must be implemented, especially within the framework of the European Semester. The feasibility of the implementation of these measures by the actors involved must be taken into account, e.g. by creating good legislation and reducing unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.**
- **The establishment in all member states and the coordination of a social dialogue between social partners is not only worthwhile at a European level.**

Gear the budget towards citizens and pan-European priorities

A large number of Community policies of the European Union are financed by the EU budget. The UK's expected departure from the EU in the current period of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is expected to lead to a significant decrease in revenue from 2021 onwards. The first proposals for the 2021-2027 financial framework presented by the European Commission point in the right direction.

In view of the importance of the MFF for the Union's capacity for action and the financing of its future tasks, the European Parliament and the German Bundestag must be closely involved in the discussions on the budget. Aligning the MFF's budgetary periods with the European Parliament's legislative period would strengthen parliamentary control over the budget. Social actors, such as representative organisations, social partners and associations, must be involved. The EU budget should support the democratic forces in Europe more strongly than before and strengthen cohesion in society.

Pan-European tasks will continue to gain in importance in coming years. These political priorities must be reflected in the budget. For example, the MFF must provide European approaches to the management of migration movements, the integration of new citizens, the protection of external borders or climate protection measures. European measures and programmes need adequate equipment. Given the increasing tasks and challenges facing the EU, the current financial framework is insufficient in terms of its current size and priorities. Instead of addressing problems at national level, synergies need to be taken advantage of at a pan-European level to use resources more efficiently.

In general, a new financing model for the EU budget should be considered. The generation of capital resources reduces national egoisms in defining political priorities and thus strengthens the democratic debate on political priorities. The question of which capital resources are effective in this sense must also become part of the political debate.

The system of rebates applied by individual member states should be abolished. This promotes equal participation in MFF payments. A sustainable and promising further development of the EU must ensure that liability, on the one hand, and responsibility and competencies, on the other hand, are as close as possible at the different political levels.

Productive and successful programmes, such as Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020, have had a very exclusive circle of participants to date. Erasmus+ gives 5% of European youth a strong boost in their personal development and also in their career opportunities, but 95% are still excluded.

We demand:

- **The discussion and communication during the MFF negotiations in Germany must become more transparent and fact-based. The positive financial aspects must be formulated more clearly. The net payer perspective should no longer play a role.**
- **The EU budget needs to be transparent and visible to the public and aligned with pan-European priorities. In future, the EU budget must include a democracy bonus. Projects implemented by organisations with democratic constitutions must be given greater support in their work. This also applies to organisations operating democratically throughout Europe.**
- **The MFF needs to be better geared to the policy requirements of the next decade and its financial strength must be developed. In addition, the allocation of funds in an MFF period must be made more flexible. The MFF must be more closely adapted to the global political situation, sustainable development and the social situation in Europe than before. We therefore call for an identifiable review of existing expenditure in light of these priorities.**
- **Due to new pan-European tasks, the budget of the European Union must be increased to over 1% of gross national income. At the same time, both the expenditure and revenue sides of the EU budget need to be optimised. The EU should increasingly cover its budget from sources independent of contributions made by member states. National rebates must be abolished in the 2021-27 MFF.**
- **Existing, successful programmes must be expanded with a focus on member states and population groups that currently have below-average participation levels in order to generate greater acceptance and open up new growth potential. A fair EU budget can promote equal opportunities within the EU.**

Migration and integration - combat the causes of flight, help refugees

There must be common European solutions in refugee policy. The decisions already taken and the European Agenda on Migration proposed by the European Commission in 2015 to better coordinate the migration policies of the member states must be consistently implemented. A common list of safe countries of origin and functioning readmission agreements to safe countries of origin are also required. A fair redistribution of refugees among EU member states is essential to meet the challenge of ensuring an adequate reception for those seeking refuge and to show solidarity. Human dignity and rights must be respected in each member state, as must a shared responsibility towards refugees. A European asylum authority is required in order to achieve uniform procedures and recognition standards. In all this, the welfare of the refugees must be the main focus.

The integration of refugees into society must be facilitated. Necessary measures include rapid access to training and the labour market, approximation of rights and adjustment of working conditions. Sustainable social integration, for example through participation in associations or active integration in municipalities, must be promoted using concrete measures, such as communicating the values of the European Union, literacy opportunities and general, political and publicly funded vocational training. Language education must be made available to all migrants, regardless of gender, family structure or status. It is often the case that women, in particular, do not participate in language courses in order to look after their children. The link between childcare and language training must therefore be consistently developed. For the actors involved in the integration process, there must be legal certainty and security of action.

In addition to poor economic prospects, the main causes of recent migration include military conflicts and repressive regimes, such as in Syria and Eritrea. Due to the diversity of these causes, development policy alone is not enough to effectively combat causes of flight. What is needed is a common European response in terms of foreign and security policy. The local economic prospects must also be improved, particularly through the promotion of private sector involvement. Countries seeking democratic reform and sustainable development require more EU support.

Questions of asylum and refugee policy must be distinguished from questions of immigration and mixing the two topics must be avoided. The reception of persons who are unlikely to be granted asylum or refugee status must take place under clear conditions. Interests of the member states can be taken into account while at the same time avoiding migration via dangerous routes. This is the only way to also combat illegal immigrant smuggling. Debating what possibilities exist for providing advisory services in the countries of origin is also essential. These must be aimed at raising awareness of standards and procedures as well as providing assistance to generate decision-making among asylum seekers. To use the potential of migration to Europe, legal migration routes must be developed. This could, for example, take the form of a blue card system. Simultaneously, integration measures are needed to enable employees to participate in society also outside the workplace.

The UN migration pact was unfortunately not signed by many EU member states. Nevertheless, the EU should continue to work at UN level to address this global phenomenon on a global basis as well.

We demand:

- **In combating the causes of flight, the European Union must expand joint development cooperation to include greater coordination of migration policy as well as foreign and security policy. Neighbourhood policy must be conducted on an equal footing. Trade and agricultural policies must be fair.**
- **For the politically persecuted, safe entry to Europe must be made possible. Procedures need to be fundamentally reformed and legally binding in order to allow for full solidarity and consistent humane standards of reception. Integration into society must be facilitated. The commitment within the framework of humanitarian reception and resettlement within the UNHCR must be expanded; if necessary, a fair balance of burdens can, if necessary, also be achieved financially.**
- **Individual member states must acknowledge their role and responsibilities in immigration. By means of immigration laws, they are to recruit specifically according to their respective needs. The potential of migration to Europe must be more clearly represented, while simultaneously taking into account personal and situational circumstances, and legal immigration channels must be expanded.**

For the abolition of borders within Europe

A basic element of European unification is that problems should never be solved at the expense of neighbours, but always together with them. Political planning across geographical borders makes it possible to focus on factual considerations in the search for shared solutions and to overcome old-style power politics. Pushing back the idea that it is possible to banish problems behind borders and then stay uninvolved allows for collaborative solutions. By essentially defining national borders as administrative borders, the EU has, in many places, defused conflicts over concrete border demarcations. However, border and neighbourhood conflicts still exist in other parts of Europe. The annexation of Crimea in violation of international law and the unclear military situation in eastern Ukraine, but also conflicts in Georgia, Armenia/Azerbaijan and Moldova, hamper the democratic and economic development of the countries. Cooperation for the benefit of people requires respect for borders that are recognised under international law.

In the Western Balkans, authoritarian nationalism prevents effective action against organised crime and impedes democratic and economic development. In addition, there is a development of negative effects on the neighbouring European Union. The European Union has offered the Western Balkan states the prospect of membership in order to provide an incentive for reforms and cross-border cooperation. However, in turning away from its own principles, it is increasingly obstructing the region's path into the community and opening up opportunities for hostile forces to exert influence. The longer the Western Balkan states are uncertain about their prospects for accession, the more the pro-European democratic forces within the states, and, in particular, young people will turn their backs on the European Union. To give candidate countries prospects for accession requires lots of people to work together. Within the framework of a genuine "European Public Diplomacy", every accession process must be discussed critically by all social forces, political decision-makers and institutions and subsequently supported widely.

In the European Single Market, freedom of movement for persons has only been fully realised by the Schengen Agreement. However, temporary border controls have been reintroduced in recent years. These measures call into question Europe's fundamental freedoms and also jeopardise economic growth, cross-border trade, employment and prosperity. Open borders promote cultural exchange between member states and are a bridge in education and culture for all people in Europe. However, full freedom of movement is still hampered by bureaucratic obstacles.

The Schengen external borders not only separate the EU from its neighbours, but also EU member states from each other, as not all member states are yet part of the Schengen area. This constitutes unequal treatment and a restriction of European citizens' rights. This inner division must be overcome. The EU must pursue the objective of gradually extending the Schengen area to additional member states and, at the same time, strengthening cooperation with the new Schengen states on the management of external borders. Initiatives for comprehensive mobility, including freedom of movement, need to be supported and complemented by information campaigns on the "benefits of EU free movement for all".

We demand:

- **For improved protection of the Schengen external borders, the competencies of EUROPOL must be further developed and FRONTEX must be expanded into a common border police force under parliamentary control by the European Parliament.**
- **The EU Commission must continue to oppose the permanent erosion of Schengen; the member states must stop border controls in the Schengen area.**
- **Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Ireland must be admitted to the Schengen area in a timely manner as soon as all criteria have been met.**
- **The European Commission and the Federal Government must ensure that EU citizens, regardless of their current place of residence and place of work, are not divided into EU nationals and EU citizens from other member states.**
- **The promotion of independent democratic and European-minded forces must be maintained and strengthened in all candidate countries, but also in the countries of the Council of Europe and Belarus.**
- **The European Union and its member states must accelerate the accession process with countries in south-east Europe in order to achieve sustainable economic and social coherence on our continent. In doing so, democratic values and the rule of law must be respected.**

Strengthen European foreign and security policy

For decades, foreign and security policy was a matter of NATO. In the meantime, however, the EU has had to find its own way of dealing independently with growing challenges, also because of the reorientation of US foreign policy: Wars and civil wars in surrounding and immediate neighbouring regions are bringing current conflicts closer. New instruments, such as cyber-attacks, hybrid warfare and terrorism inside and outside Europe, threaten the safety of the population and the integrity and stability of the European Union. In addition, fundamental principles of European policy, such as respect for international law and multilateral cooperation, are coming under global pressure.

Securing peace is the most important task of the European Union. Diplomacy and reconciliation of interests at the negotiating table are the first choice in terms of tools. The European approach covers a wide range of instruments, from democratisation and the promotion of the rule of law to development policies, education, investment promotion and trade. The EU should confidently represent to the outside world as to what created and secured peace on our continent.

Effective foreign policy requires the ability to take decisions that are as unanimous as possible. In this regard, the Federal Government must be loyal to the Union and its partners and give priority to Europe's capacity for action over national prestige. Also, in the event of Brexit, close cooperation with the United Kingdom must be maintained on foreign and security policy issues. A clear foreign policy approach, encompassing all the instruments at the disposal of the Union and the states concerned, can be used to encourage swift and decisive action. The EU must present a united front in the United Nations Security Council, which makes a (permanent) EU seat appear worthwhile.

The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) adopted in 2017 enables the EU member states to cooperate closely and on a permanent basis. Important building blocks here are joint procurement (for cost savings and inter-compatibility), joint education and training, joint capacity building (e.g. to counter cyber-attacks) and joint investment in expensive equipment that can then be shared by all member states. In conjunction with the ever-increasing cooperation of the national armies and the establishment of common permanent command structures, a European Army can thus be created on a gradual basis. In order to ensure effective parliamentary control, a defence committee and a military commissioner should be established at the European Parliament.

The EU member states participating in PESCO should commit themselves to creating the best possible social conditions for both military and civilian members of their armed forces. In addition to the harmonisation of national defence strategies, this is an important factor for stable military cooperation between the participating states. This is the only way to build confidence, security and stability within the EU regarding a common security policy.

We demand:

- **The Federal Government should not cease to advocate multilateralism, negotiated solutions and the application of international law within the European Union.**

- **In connection with its Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Federal Government should resolutely explore and engage with all the possibilities for further developing the Common Foreign and Security Policy.**
- **The Federal Government should support a permanent seat for the EU in the UN Security Council and not claim a German seat.**
- **The Federal Government should advocate majority voting in the Foreign Affairs Council, especially in the case of acute crisis decisions.**
- **In implementing the agreed steps in the field of foreign and security policy and in strengthening Europe's common defence capability, the Federal Government must take on its position as role model and leader. More European commonality means greater efficiency in terms of the defence spending that is necessary, thus paving the path to a European Parliament army in the long term.**

For a single market of the future

Trade means exchange and peaceful competition that unites people and creates growth. However, this is only the case if it takes place according to clear rules, prevents economic exploitation and enables the development of new skills by all those involved. The success of the European Union therefore depends as much on shaping the common single market as on regulating our trade relationships on a global basis.

Almost 30 years after its establishment, the single market is still incomplete. Structural deficits exist in services and in the energy sector as well as in cross-border access to capital and in the mobility of workers (recognition of qualifications, safeguarding social standards). The EU must also ensure a fairer approach to taxing companies within the single market, for example via a European corporate tax base, turnover-based digital tax and a European financial transaction tax. It is of particular concern that some EU states, such as Italy, are not developing together with the others, but are falling behind. The banking and capital market union must be developed further to a high standard.

In addition, there are the challenges arising from digitisation, genetic engineering and the development of artificial intelligence. In many areas, national legislation (e.g. for mobile communications, standards for electrical mobility and autonomous mobility) is repeatedly introduced, which then has to be laboriously Europeanised instead of identifying new regulatory requirements in good time and tackling them together. Obstacles are thus set for the establishment of efficient companies in future markets where growth impulses would be necessary.

With the General Data Protection Regulation, the EU has shown that it is in a position to create legislation that will become the global standard in an area of high strategic relevance. Here, with recourse to the own fundamental values (protection of personal rights), a locational advantage has even been created for companies, which can offer services from Europe that would not be so trustworthy in any other location. This should be an incentive for further projects. In addition, the EU must invest in education and research, but also provide appropriate support for business start-ups, to ensure that Europeans get involved in future markets promptly. Europe can only maintain its prosperity and social systems in the long term if it remains at the global forefront of technological innovation. The InvestEU programme is a success story and should be linked to other programmes and communication about this should be improved. An “industrial strategy” as envisaged by the Federal Government can, if at all, only be a European strategy!

Globally, the European Union must remain an advocate of open markets and free trade. 46% of EU economic output is based on foreign trade and the trend is an upwards one. Protectionism and nationalism contradict European interests and the European conviction that no one can win in the long run by cheating others. As a consequence, this also means that the European Union can only conclude fair and comprehensive trade agreements; the agreements with Japan and Canada show how this can be done. One's own power must not be exploited to the detriment of the partners; rather, the partners must be given the opportunity to create stable and sustainable development. In order to achieve good and sustainable agreements, broad participation of interest groups and a democratic approach to concluding agreements are essential. Fairness and partnership must be the trademarks of European trade policy.

We demand:

- **The Commission and member states must make joint efforts to improve the situation in countries that are falling behind economically and, in particular, to further reduce youth unemployment.**
- **The European Union must create good framework conditions for growth and investment. Investment financing opportunities must be linked under InvestEU and receive adequate funding. A high level of investment in trans-European energy, transport and broadband networks is needed.**
- **Globally, the EU must do everything it can to strengthen the multilateral trading system. The World Trade Organisation must be modernised and its rules enforced more effectively. New free trade agreements must be democratic and modern. Trade wars must be prevented.**

Prepare EU policies for the implementation of sustainability goals and the climate treaty

In 2015, important global decisions on sustainability and climate protection were taken with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the UN climate agreement in Paris. The EU and its member states have committed themselves to implementing these agreements. The global implementation of these agreements is essential in order to preserve the natural basis for life, combat the causes of migration and flight as well as counteract climate change. The protests throughout Europe, such as the Fridays for Future movement, illustrate the concern, not only amongst young adults, regarding inadequate climate policy.

In order to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius (preferably below 1.5 degrees Celsius), the EU and the member states must adopt concrete measures and reforms as well as align EU spending with climate change objectives. The goals of a greenhouse gas-neutral global economy by 2050 and a strengthened European internal energy market are to be achieved in particular by means of intelligent investments in electricity grids for renewable energies and trans-European network expansion.

The European Union has played an exemplary role in the negotiations on Agenda 2030 and has contributed to the adoption of ambitious objectives. It is therefore all the more disappointing that the European Commission has not launched a European implementation strategy by the fourth year after the adoption of the Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have not yet been implemented in common EU policies, such as the Multiannual Financial Framework or the common agricultural policy, and there is still no European framework agreement for implementing the SDGs with minimum requirements for all member states. EU institutions and member states must examine all policies relevant to sustainability and climate change, in particular foreign, security, peace and development policies, in their areas of competence to see whether they comply with the agreements reached on the global sustainability goals and the Paris Agreement.

By February 2018, an expert group commissioned by the EU Commission had worked out how the rules for financial markets needed to be changed in order to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. The EU Commission's efforts to provide more funds for a sustainable economy and, at the same time, secure financial market stability can help to promote sustainable investment and an energy, transport and agriculture transition as well as consistent decarbonisation of the economy. An EU-wide classification of sustainable activities is an important step towards greater transparency for consumers. In this regard, it is important to review regulations that stand in the way of a long-term and sustainable orientation of the financial markets.

There can be no national solutions for dealing with plastic waste and marine pollution. The EU plastics strategy adopted in September 2018 is therefore an important step towards a European solution. In the long term, plastic waste must be reduced globally by reducing plastic production and increasing recycling and reuse. Priority must be given to citizens' health and the protection of the environment, taking into account the competitiveness of European industry.

We demand:

- **The European Union must continue to play its pioneering role in environmental and climate protection in order to prevent species extinction and achieve CO₂ neutrality by 2050 at the latest. Consistent CO₂ pricing is an important step in this direction. Innovative forces from society and business must be linked to work together to achieve technological progress.**
- **The European Commission must present an implementation strategy with timetables, objectives and concrete measures to comply with Agenda 2030 in all EU policy areas. Sustainability must be regarded as an overarching, prioritised guiding principle in order to effectively shape the change towards development within the limits of our planet.**
- **The EU institutions and member states must show the political will and set the course for making sustainable financing less complicated and more transparent. Overall, the high level of regulatory pressure on credit institutions must not increase any further. Regulatory and supervisory interventions must be limited to what is necessary.**
- **The implementation of the European plastics strategy must be consistently pursued. At the same time, the European Union should conclude international agreements on plastics prevention.**

Good EU legislation requires transparency and rigour

European democracy works best with the Community method. The interaction between legislators, the public and social forces must be preserved and developed. Intergovernmental procedures may only be justified in an emergency if Community solutions are not possible.

The common good is at the heart of every democracy and was also set out in the interinstitutional agreement on better legislation. Public and parliamentary competition and the reconciliation of interests between public interest and self-interest are just as much a part of a pluralistic democracy as lawful lobbying. European democracy can only function if representative associations and/or democratically organised interest groups are given transparent and equal influence in the legislative process and if all decisions taken there are transparent. On the other hand, access to EU legislation, such as protocols, documents and participation lists, which is more difficult at both national and EU level, creates an imbalance between interest groups with strong and weak access to resources. A broad debate in society on important European policy issues is subsequently restricted and this promotes general criticism of the EU that is expressed without thought. Existing transparency and procedural requirements are often implemented poorly in terms of quality and vary considerably from policy area to policy area and committee to committee.

The transparency required by Article 11 TEU concerns all the institutions of the European Union, including the European Central Bank. Regulations on the transparency of lobbying forces from business and society are developed to a greater extent with respect to the European Commission and Parliament than with regard to federal policy. Transparency registers and codes of conduct are a step forward, but they reach the limits of national decision-makers in the process. The goal should be a shared register and code that would apply to both legislators and the Commission.

Negotiations behind closed doors are not only criticised practice at summits, but also in the legislation of the member states and the Council of the European Union. The European Parliament also shortens the ordinary legislative procedure by 80 percent by means of an informal triad with the Council and the European Commission. While this approach allows legislative acts to be adopted after a single reading, it does not guarantee the degree of openness and transparency required for political legitimacy. The decision of the European Court of Justice in March 2018 on the obligation to publish documents from informal dialogues underlined the criticism and must be implemented in the new legislative period in full.

For the Council of Ministers, which plays an even more important role in European decision-making than the Parliament, transparency in legislation is particularly deficient. This also applies to the Eurogroup. Informal meetings must not decide on decisions that have a political effect and thus restrict democratic freedom of information. The practice of secrecy in the Councils of Ministers, but also in national governments (such as the Federal Republic of Germany), means that the population and social forces often find it difficult to understand the negotiations and processes. Currently, most documents prepared by Council working groups and preparatory bodies have LIMITE status and are therefore published only on request, although EU Regulation 1049/2001 requires public access to

documents of the EU institutions. The reports and investigations of the European Ombudsman in this context are to be particularly welcomed and supported.

In the previous policy cycle, the EU Commission set itself the goal of improving EU policy making and legislation. The Better Regulation initiative, in conjunction with a balanced legal impact assessment, has improved the quality of legislation and reduced unnecessary bureaucracy. These activities are positive in principle and in terms of efficiency, transparency and the involvement of stakeholders and should be consolidated in the new policy cycle.

While in recent years the European Commission has significantly increased transparency in terms of the consultation and involvement of interest groups and while the European Parliament also grants hearings to a wide range of interests, the Council only has inadequate documentation regarding this.

We demand:

- **European legislation in the Community method must be strengthened and developed in the sense of a modern pluralistic democracy. National European policy must not be inferior to the standards of transparent legislation.**
- **EU institutions should publicly document to what extent (a) they have listened to national and European interests at all stages of EU legislative procedures and (b) whether/how public interest has been taken into account.**
- **European legislation must be simple, thoroughly balanced and clearly understandable to the citizens. It is the substance of social will and progress.**
- **The European Parliament must make greater use of the advantages offered by the ordinary legislative procedure in three readings, with the broad participation of social forces. There should be clear legal regulations stating in which cases a trialogue procedure is necessary. The ECJ ruling on the trialogue must be implemented in full.**
- **The Council and its representatives must comply with the rules of the common lobby register and the codes of conduct. National governments should also be required to disclose their positions and voting behaviour in the legislative process on a particular issue with justification.**
- **The Federal Government should set a good example, particularly within the framework of the German Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of 2020, and work towards greater transparency at all Council levels.**

For modern German European politics

The Federal Government made an impressive promise of a “European Germany” in 2018. The forward-looking wording of the government programme coincides with the increasingly strong pro-European attitude of the German population and social forces.

German European politics is, however, primarily on the defensive, for example in the successful defence against the negative consequences of the financial crisis or, currently, Brexit. A “catenaccio” European political defensive prevents modern European politics, which should be characterised by an attractive forward-looking game. After all, the German government is now avoiding a “net payer” rhetoric and is more open to compromises, such as on the eurozone. The German strategy on security and defence policy also deserves praise. Beyond this, however, there are hardly any substantial German reform contributions for a strategic agenda for the coming policy cycle of 2019-2024 or for the Multiannual Financial Framework. German European politics is a long way from a broad debate on the future. This is unsatisfactory, since Germany’s position as largest member state and strongest economy within the Union demands modern and future-oriented European politics.

European politics is domestic politics. Domestic political actors must also therefore not only align themselves with short-term, national self-interests. National interests and policies always need a European reflex.

German European coordination must be modernised from the bottom up and adapt to the EU Treaties that are currently in force. There must be a balance between the Council formations, which are relevant in terms of legislation, and the European Council, which is overemphasised in politics and in the media. EU coordination must be coherent, transparent and inclusive.

Decisions and strategies of German European politics are often taken in the different ministries in a manner that in reality is not coordinated. Traditional German diplomacy is barely integrated into domestic European politics. Empathy and expertise for European neighbours are only reflected in the evaluation of complex social and economic contexts to a minimal extent.

An increasing number of decision-makers in Germany are hesitant or reluctant to take further steps towards integration because of individual interests. If politics, state and social forces do not develop concepts for a European strategy and modern European politics capable of taking action, it will not be possible to use the population’s current pro-European attitude for an improved European Union.

We demand:

- **German European politics must act reliably and be broadly anchored in parliament and society so that Germany can act in a sustainable manner within a united Europe.**
- **The organisational structure of European politics and the coordination capacity of the Federal Government must be strengthened and expanded. The departmental principle and party-political egoism must not be decisive. To this end, we call for a central European**

political governance unit in which European policy is coherently promoted and which can confront the democratic discourse within Germany and throughout Europe.

- **Modern German diplomacy should contribute its expertise on all European partner countries (and not just a few countries) to the domestic political debate. The separation of internal and external political communication is anachronistic and must be overcome. “European Public Diplomacy” which goes beyond state actors can promote a structured Europe-wide dialogue.**
- **In order to close the gap between politics and society in German European politics, representatives of democratic and representative associations and societies, together with experts, should be involved in shaping German European policy.**