



For Solidarity and an Inclusive Society

Many people fled to Germany in the past few years. This raises questions such as: can we integrate them all? Are there sufficient housing and job facilities even now that rising rents and the lack of jobs pose a big problem to many people? We say: these questions are justified. The reasons for these worries, however, lie in a policy which for decades has made the wealthy even wealthier and the poor even poorer; which has reduced the middle class and dismantled public services. We say: anybody with human feelings helps people in distress. We do not tolerate racism and xenophobia. DIE LINKE consistently stands up against rightwing agitation. We stand for an open society. We put in our weight for social justice and equal rights for all people living in this country. We explicitly say: our alternative is solidarity.



Good Pay for Good Work

Whoever wants to combat fear and uncertainty has to provide the people with social security. Many people, most of them young, grope from one marginal job to the next or are bound to accept temporary work. We want fair working conditions allowing all employees to plan their future, and we want all professions mainly done by women to be upgraded and better paid. It is unacceptable that women earn over 20 per cent less than men.

For creating better working conditions, fresh ideas and a long breath are required. We have both. Together with trade unions and associations we for years campaigned for a legal minimum wage – successfully! Now it is urgent to raise minimum hourly wage to twelve euros.

We want working time to be reduced to 30 hours a week. Less working hours without loss of earning will counter mass unemployment and leave people more time for cultural development and democratic participation.

Nobody Must Live in Poverty

Nobody should have to live in poverty in old age and all should be able to spend the eve of their lives in dignity. We stand for introducing a statutory minimum pension of 1,050 euros for those people – mainly women – who were unable to adequately contribute to the pension scheme. Yet pension should not only protect from poverty but also secure a decent living standard. Therefore the pension level has to be restored to the standard it had prior to the policy of cutting pensions as pursued by Gerhard Schroeder and Angela Merkel.

Poverty which to a very large degree affects single mothers also results from the Hartz-IV system of sanctions which forces people to accept poorly paid jobs. Instead of the Hartz-IV labour regulations, a sanction-free minimum income of 1,050 euros is required to grant all people a life in dignity, without the fear of sanctions.

Adequate Healthcare for All

Health may grow expensive. More and more people can no longer afford co-payments. Already, poor people can again be recognized by the state of their teeth. The gap between the rich and the poor is even reflected in life expectancy: Poor people not only grow ill more often, on an average they also die earlier. However, proper health care for all is feasible. To ensure it, a solidarity-based citizens' insurance scheme is required to which everybody is liable to contribute, including parliament members and top earners.

Hospitals are affected by a crisis in care. Ever less staff have to attend to ever more patients. This results in growing pressure on personnel, insufficient attention, a lack in hygiene and even more accidents. To fight the shortfall in staff, we demand legally fixed personnel quotas. To ensure needs-oriented funding hospitals must be tackled by public authorities.



There is Enough Money but it is Unevenly Distributed

DIE LINKE calls for a general social offensive for integrating also the wealthy and tax fugitives in the tax and social insurance systems. Sixty-two families worldwide own more than the lower half of the world population does. In Germany, too, the upper ten per cent possess two thirds of the entire assets while the lower half must make do with just one per cent. We therefore demand a millionaire tax, an income tax reform which taxes annual incomes from 60,000 euros upwards while disburdening incomes below that, and a tax on assets from one million euros upwards. These are necessary steps for removing the social imbalance and restore the sustainability of the public infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and traffic routes. They would show that a society of solidarity is feasible.



For More Democracy

Corporate groups and the super-rich ever more brazenly influence political decision-making. We want the precedence of democracy over economy. Democracy, after all, does not mean that 'money makes the world go round' but that people can decide under peaceful conditions. Essential to democracy is that we can pursue our interests at work without fear of job loss, and that our working time for income generation and at home leaves us enough scope for leisure, the family, and political and social commitments. Essential to democracy is that immigrants are not regarded as second-class citizens and that we can be different without fear. Democracy implies that also when dissenting we can together work on solutions.

We thoroughly believe in democracy and want to strengthen it, e.g. through referenda on federal level, clear-cut regulations for and the restriction of lobbying, and a ban on corporate donations to political parties.



Make Housing and Energy Affordable

The proportion of public housing keeps dwindling while rents are soaring and more and more people are crowded out. Due to the federal government's continuous political failure there is a lack of affordable housing for the medium and lower income brackets mainly in metropolitan areas. We need an emergency programme for public housing. The ceiling on rents as decreed by the federal government is a mere joke! We need a nationwide effective ceiling which limits rents and stops further privatizations.

Along with rents, energy must be affordable. We intend to introduce social tariffs to relieve low-income households. In addition, an ecological turnaround is necessary. To safeguard affordable energy prices we have to quit fossil-atomic power production and switch to supply from renewable sources run by municipalities and citizens while ensuring high energy efficiency.



High-quality Education for All

Instead of fostering social justice, the existing education system aggravates and cements social disparities. DIE LINKE wants every child to have equal opportunities. The German education system, however, is a far cry from this. To a growing degree a child's future is determined by the origin, the financial situation and the educational standard of its parents. We want to overcome the early apportioning of educational opportunities through a divisive schooling system. DIE LINKE stands for a socially caring education system: This starts from the right to day-care facility for every child and includes an extension of integrated learning, guaranteed apprenticeship and free university studies. Not social exclusion, but cooperation should determine modern learning.



One Europe for All

Peace, democracy, welfare and social equity were the core messages of the European idea. Messages which were betrayed by politics even before the 2008 financial and economic crisis. Instead of restructuring the banking sector, holding banks liable for their speculative transactions and introducing Europe-wide taxes on financial operations to cover speculation losses sovereign EU member states were subjected to austerity programmes which imply the dismantling of the socially caring state and democracy. The European idea was adulterated and the EU became ruled by banks and big corporations.

However, many problems – ecological, social and economic – cannot be solved any longer on a national scale. This is why falling back to national states is no alternative. Any disintegration of the EU rather harbours the danger of a further rise of nationalist and right-wing populist forces. We counter this danger with the idea and movement for a social and democratic re-foundation of Europe.



War is No Political Tool

DIE LINKE stands up against war, rearmament and militarization. Our solidarity goes out to people worldwide who struggle for peace, disarmament and global justice. We have always said no to war engagements of the federal armed forces and will continue to do so also in future.

Foreign engagements of the Bundeswehr are not conducive to civilian reconstruction or to humanitarian aid. The mission of the Bundeswehr has to be confined to national defence and disaster relief. We want to limit the military capability of Germany – and the EU.

DIE LINKE calls for civilian conflict prevention and resolution as an alternative to war employments and therefore more funds should be invested in development cooperation and civilian crisis prevention. Disarmament and the prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction have to be put back on the international agenda. Arms exports have to be outlawed. DIE LINKE wants the deployment of nuclear weapons on German soil to be ended.

History and Structure of DIE LINKE Party

On June 16, 2007, DIE LINKE party was formed out of the Linkspartei PDS and the Electoral Alliance for Labour and Social Justice (WASG). In this way two parties with different backgrounds but similar objectives grew into an all-German left alternative. Presently, DIE LINKE has 59,000 members organized in 16 Land and 350 district branches. Of them, 37 per cent are women – the highest share of any party in the German parliament.

DIE LINKE is part of the European Left (EL) which is an alliance of 31 European parties. DIE LINKE is headed by two Chair Persons with equal rights: Katja Kipping and Bernd Rixinger. Its General Secretary is Matthias Höhn. In between the party congresses, the 44-strong Executive Committee decides on political and organizational matters.

Join Hands!

You want to support DIE LINKE? You want to help shaping Europe? We are looking out for dreamers, idealists and notorious utopians the same as pragmatists and realists. With us you can be who you are. With us you can be active and join in decision-making. We need your expert knowledge, your beliefs and ideas. With us, you can also simply be a member. Alternatives are there: for peace, equal opportunities, social justice and democracy. This requires courage, but what would our world be like without idealism?

For membership:
fip@die-linke.de

Online donations:
<http://spenden.die-linke.de>

Offline donations:
Executive of DIE LINKE party
IBAN: DE38 1009 0000 5000 6000 00
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- I am interested in more information.
 I would like an on-site conversation.
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