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We, democratic socialists, democratic leftists with differing political trajectories and biographies, ideological and religious influences, women and men, old and young, long-established residents and immigrants, people with and without disabilities, have joined together in a new leftist party.

We have held fast to the dream of humanity that a better world is possible. We are not and will not be like those other political parties that submissively yield to the dictates of the economically powerful and for that very reason are barely distinguishable from each other. (From the preamble of DIE LINKE party manifesto)

## We are DIE LINKE

We have held fast to the dream of humanity that a better world is possible. We are fighting for a society in which no child has to grow up in poverty, in which everyone can lead self-determined lives in peace, dignity and social security, and for a society that can be shaped democratically. We are firmly committed to climate protection, affordable housing and a good health system for everyone, and together we resolutely oppose any shift to the Right.

## DIE LINKE is a Young Party with Long-standing Traditions

On 16 June 2007, DIE LINKE was founded as a result of a merger between the East German Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and the West German Labour and Social Justice—Election Alternative (WASG). This alliance forged a pan-German left-wing alternative, which from the outset has staged a series of electoral successes and has entered seven West German State parliaments. As of 2014, DIE LINKE has had its first prime minister in Thuringia with Bodo Ramelow. DIE LINKE has more than 60,000 members, of whom some 37% are women thus placing DIE LINKE in a prominent position compared with other political factions in the Bundestag, the German Federal Parliament. Party committees and parliamentary mandates are quota-based and generally have a share of women of 50% or more. DIE LINKE is affiliated with the European Left (PEL). Janine Wissler and Susanne Hennig-Wellsow are co-chairpersons of DIE LINKE and Jörg Schindler is the party's secretary general. The forty-four-member party executive committee decides on political and organisational issues in those period between party congresses.

## European Left

The Party of the European Left (PEL) was founded in Rome in 2004 with the participation of the PDS. It currently unites forty-two European member-, observer- and partner-parties. DIE LINKE is working jointly with other PEL parties for a peaceful, cosmopolitan and social Europe.



## A Europe for Everyone

Initially, peace, democracy, prosperity and social equilibrium stood at the heart of the European idea. This European idea, however, has turned into an EU dominated by banks and multi-national corporations. In the wake of the 2008 financial and economic crisis, the banking sector was not restructured, nor was a financial transaction tax introduced. Instead, austerity programmes entailing massive social and democratic dismantling were imposed on EU member states. Retreating into the nation state, however, is not an alternative, because so many ecological, social and economic problems can no longer be solved solely on a national level. Conversely, a disintegration of the EU runs the risk of an even further rise of nationalist and right-wing populist forces. Rather, we are advocating a Europe that is open to all and shows solidarity, a Europe that jointly fosters social and democratic standards and that remains at peace.

## Peace, Disarmament, and Solidarity instead of War

DIE LINKE is the sole party in the Bundestag that consistently opposes war, rearmament and militarization. We stand in solidarity with all those around the world who are fighting for disarmament, and campaigning for peace and global justice. We resolutely reject any overseas deployments by the Bundeswehr, the German armed forces, and their rearmament. Germany continues to export weapons and armaments all over the world, including to regions where they fuel human rights violations, civil war and war. German weapons have been deployed in the wars in Syria and Yemen. They have been used to displace, maim and kill people. This "Made in Germany" business deal with death must come to an end: Arms exports must be banned. And all nuclear weapons must be withdrawn from German soil.



## Solidarity and Anti-Fascism

We want an all-inclusive society where exclusion and exploitation have no place, with equal rights for everyone living in Germany, with a functioning welfare state and public services. We reject unequal wages and unequal opportunities. Instead, we will provide for a good life for men and women, East and West Germans, Germans and non-Germans alike. Each and every individual counts, we will leave no one behind, not even those who are on the run. We want to stop deportations, to expand the right to stay in Germany, to ensure timely sea rescues, and to enable legal immigration.

Our message is unambiguous: Our alternative is to stand in solidarity. We've witnessed the spectre of fascism in those murders in Hanau and Halle, in the assassination of Walter Lübcke, and the murder series committed by the NSU (neo-Nazi terrorist group), in the ascent of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), an extreme right-wing party, and at the unfettered public gatherings and marches by radical right-wing thugs, right-wing populists and members of the Reich Citizens' Movement at corona-virus deniers' demonstrations. DIE LINKE has consistently opposed the rise of right-wing populism, fascism and right-wing terrorism.

## Good Work—Good Wages

Despite being one of the wealthiest nations on Earth, Germany has an enormous low-wage sector. Many people scramble from one temporary job to the next, or rely on temporary work or mini- and midi-jobs. This has to stop. Instead, we want good and safe working conditions. In collaboration with trade unions and various socially oriented organisations, we have been pressing for a minimum wage for years—with success! We now need to swiftly raise the statutory minimum wage even further. Occupations primarily carried out by women must be upgraded and better paid. In terms of the gender pay gap, women should not have to earn less than men, sometimes by even more than 20 percent. We want to reduce the working week: We are aiming for a thirty-hour week with full compensation. This will help combat mass unemployment and allow people more time to live.

## Fighting Poverty in a Rich Country

No one should have to live in poverty in their old age; everyone should be able to enjoy their retirement in dignity. Pensions must protect people against poverty and safeguard a good standard-of-living. That is why pension levels must be raised again, just as they were before the pension-cutting policies instigated by the Socialist-Green alliance government under Gerhard Schröder and subsequently under Angela Merkel's coalitions. We want to provide those who have not been able to pay enough into a pension scheme—primarily women—a statutory minimum pension. Poverty, which gravely impacts single mothers, is equally a consequence of low wages and the unemployment sanction system, which forces people to take low-paid jobs. We want a sanction-free minimum income that will enable everyone to live with dignity.

## Climate Action and Protection: Corporations Should Pay

Two-thirds of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are generated by only one hundred large corporations. That is why we are not asking ordinary people to pay for consistent climate protection, for example, through higher heating costs or rising electricity prices. DIE LINKE is the only party willing to take on the real polluters—the corporations. A climate-friendly future is only possible in a socially equitable way. Those who are now barely able to make ends meet must not be further disadvantaged by rising consumer prices on account of climate protection measures. We are unrolling a rescue package for employees in the impacted industrial sectors with job and income guarantees.

There can be no climate protection without changes in transportation: We want to expand bus and rail services and make public transport free of charge. The first step is free travel for children and senior citizens, and within five years it should be free for everyone, everywhere. By 2035, we intend to make all local authorities, the economy, and society climate-neutral.

## Staff-shortages Endangers Our Health

Hospitals and nursing homes find themselves in a state of emergency: they are facing a shortage of staff everywhere. This entails stress and overwork for the nursing staff, while endangering the patients' health and medical outcomes. Throughout the covid pandemic, these shortages have become even more evident. For decades, hospitals and nursing homes have been run on a profit basis. The German health care system has degenerated into a playground for corporations. DIE LINKE wants to change all that. Instead of generating profits, hospitals should make people healthy. Our hospitals and nursing homes belong in public hands. Hospitals need 100,000 additional nurses and nursing homes and the care sector another 100,000! Nursing staff deserve better pay. Proper health care for everyone is possible. We need a solidarity-based health system and a long-term health care insurance into which everyone contributes—including members of parliament and top earners.

## Affordable Rents Instead of Fat Yields for Investors: Rent Cap

The number of social housing units is falling, rents are constantly on the rise, while ever more people are being forced out of their neighbourhoods. Far too little affordable housing is available for middle and lower income groups—especially in metropolitan areas. This is the consequence of years of the Federal government's failed housing policies. Their attempts to regulate rents have failed! We need a nationwide rent cap that prohibits rent increases, sets upper limits for rents, and reduces excessive rents. Furthermore, we require newly-built homes for everyone rather than just luxurious palaces for the rich. We urgently need to revive social housing schemes and construct at least 250,000 new social housing units per year. We are also taking back our homes by expropriating rack-renting corporations and strengthening municipalities' right of first refusal.

## Quality Education for Everyone

DIE LINKE wants every child to enjoy equal educational opportunities. Unfortunately, however, the German

education system is far from ensuring this. Instead of providing greater equity, the current educational system both exacerbates and cements social disparities. The parents' financial situation and educational level will determine how their children's future will play out. We want to overcome the early assignment of children to the different school categories, because every child should be supported in an optimal way, instead of being pigeonholed at the youngest age possible. DIE LINKE is calling for quality educational opportunities for every child and adult! Beginning with the right to a place in a day-care center, longer learning together, a guaranteed apprenticeship place and tuition-free studies.

## Equal Living Conditions Throughout Germany

Not only does Eastern Germany (those regions comprising the former GDR) urgently need a fresh start but strong local authorities are called for throughout the entire country. We finally want to make good on the promise enshrined in the Grundgesetz, the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, of equal living conditions throughout the country. We will relieve municipalities of imposed burdens, support disadvantaged regions, while investing in equal living conditions in the East and the West alike. We want uniform collective bargaining zones and equal wages throughout this country.

Equalizing pensions for people living in eastern Germany should not present a disadvantage for current employees. Pension values in the East must be raised immediately to the levels of those in the West. Insofar as large wage disparities persist, the conversion of salaries in the East should be retained in order to fill the pension gap. We have constantly given priority to investing in structurally weaker regions, socially isolated communities and urban districts. Faster Internet connection is needed everywhere. Expanding the use of renewable energies, as well as the bus and rail network, will offer fresh opportunities, especially for rural communities.

## Make the Rich Pay: An Equitable Distribution of Wealth

Never before have incomes and wealth been so unequally distributed in Germany: The forty-five wealthiest households alone own as much as the entire poorer half of the population. Little wonder, given that taxes on wealth and high incomes have fallen. The last time wealth tax was collected was in 1997. The ramifications of this policy have been dramatic: Public services have been cut or privatized. Toilets do not work in many schools, not to mention the lack of laptops. Hospitals are being privatized or closed. Teachers and educators are hard to find. Are no funds available for these purposes? Yes, the funding is available. Finally, we will fairly tax high levels of wealth and inheritances. We will use these revenues to modernize our schools and hospitals, as well as to construct affordable publicly-owned housing. Our tax promise: Single people earning less than 6,500 euros a month will pay less tax. Those earning more will pay more.

## Democracy instead of Lobbying

We no longer want to have to tolerate that Germany increasingly degenerates into a self-service store for the rich and for multi-national corporations and allow

capitalism to destroy our planet. Corporations and the super-rich are unabashedly exerting a growing influence on political decisions. This must stop right now: Democracy does not mean "money rules the world," but rather that power comes from the people. Members of parliament must disclose all their supplementary income; corporation must desist from influencing politics through large donations and sponsoring, because such conduct severely damages our democracy. Lobbyists ought to be put in their place: We need a lobby register and an outright ban on corporate donations to all political parties. DIE LINKE is fully independent. We cannot be bought. DIE LINKE is the only party in the Bundestag that does not accept donations from corporations and lobbyists.

## Join Us and Get Involved!

Do you want to make the world a better place to live or at least to start to do so in your own neighbourhood? There are many good reasons to get involved for more social justice, climate protection, peace, affordable housing, and to mobilise against the rising Nazi threat. Do you want to become active? There are multiple ways to join us: You can support our nationwide campaigns for a rent cap and proper caring, participate in the forthcoming electoral campaign or in direct actions, or even conduct door-to-door discussions. Join us and become a member of DIE LINKE.

We are looking forward to meeting you! Together, we will make Germany an equitable country for us all.

**For membership:**  
<https://en.die-linke.de/contact/membership>

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Attn: Jörg Schindler

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Fill in and send by mail to the address above.

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**DIE LINKE.**



**I  
LOVE  
YOU!**

**DIE LINKE.**

To say so requires courage and great emotions.  
As does notoriously believing in a better world.  
Yet what would our world be like without idealism?

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