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Die Linke's election manifesto for the House of Representatives elections on 20 September 2026

Legal notice

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Making Berlin affordable.

Berlin is your city. But at the moment, all too often it doesn't feel like it. Berlin thrives because of you. Because of the people who live here. Because of those who share their everyday lives. Who are there for one another. In their homes, in their neighbourhoods, in their daily interactions.

Berlin is shaped by everyday life.

Our city doesn't run itself. It is sustained. Every single day. By people who go to work, take on responsibility and, at the end of the day, just want to make ends meet. By those who actually generate our city's wealth. By those who work the shifts, who look after others, care for them, educate them and listen to them. Who raise their children, support them as they grow up and take them to nursery or school. Who meet up with friends, look after others and make time for one another. Who bring their neighbourhoods to life and use the parks to sit, have barbecues, play, chat and take a breather. From those who live their lives as they please, who fall through the cracks of the system or are marginalised by it, and yet are still equal members of our society. Berlin is shaped by everyday life. By what people share with one another. Time. Help. Attention. By the feeling of not being alone. That someone is there. That is what makes Berlin what it is.

Some have felt at home here for a long time. Others are only just getting to know this city. And yet something shared is emerging. People find others with whom they can share what matters, and they organise themselves into tenants' groups, initiatives, trade unions, sports clubs, neighbourhood projects, cultural centres and youth centres. They meet people who are different and who complement one another. There is friction, support and solidarity. This is what holds Berlin together. It's not perfect. But it's reliable.

Elif Eralp is standing as a candidate for the office of Governing Mayor for this Berlin. So that those who sustain this city can once again afford to live here. We don't just want to govern; we want to bring about change. We are ready for this.

Making Berlin affordable again.

For many of us, Berlin is the most beautiful city in the world, but what we love about Berlin is under threat. It is under threat because Vonovia, Deutsche Wohnen and Heimstaden – as major private property groups – are making millions from your rent. Because your rent is their profit. Because the CDU not only turns a blind eye to this ‘rent mafia’, but is itself fuelling the rent spiral. Because the people who keep this city running don’t know whether they’ll be able to afford the next rent increase. Because flats have become investment products and objects of speculation.

In Berlin, people often no longer work for a good life, but just to pay the next month’s rent. The shop assistant can no longer afford her flat. The care worker is moving to the outskirts. The teacher commutes an hour and a half to school. The firefighter lives in Brandenburg. The newsagent is giving up. Those who keep this city running often can no longer live here. Moving house has long since become impossible. Flats are mainly available to the rich. Anyone who works in this city should be able to make a decent living from their work.

For a long time, Berlin was a metropolis for people without deep pockets. That’s what made the city what it is. It attracted people from all over the world. We want that to be possible again: our urban policy isn’t measured by whether the highest possible returns can be achieved here. We want it to make the city affordable for everyone. We want everyone who lives here to be able to participate in Berlin – in education, culture, sport and science. We want those who need help to be supported. We want open spaces to remain, and for no one to be harassed at the council offices. We want no one to be forced out.

Because more and more spaces are disappearing: shops, nurseries, advice centres and doctors’ surgeries are closing down because commercial rents are skyrocketing. At the same time, millions of square metres of office space stand empty.

The housing crisis and speculation in commercial premises are threatening the future of our neighbourhoods, the future of Berlin. The market is blind to what our city needs. The market does not sort things out.

We are declaring war on the sell-off of the city: in the interests of everyone who keeps this city running. Against those who merely exploit it for profit. And yes, we are also prepared to take on powerful players to achieve this, because the time has come.

Our policies step in when rents go through the roof. They protect the essentials of life. Housing is not a commodity like any other. Housing is a right.

We will take tough action against unscrupulous landlords: putting a stop to illegal rents, consistently prosecuting and ending rent gouging, putting an end to rip-offs involving furnished flats, and nationalising the major property groups.

With our Secure Housing Act, we are creating transparency in the housing market and compelling all landlords to charge affordable rents. Almost 400,000 flats belong to the State of Berlin and thus to all Berliners. Our council flats must remain affordable. That is why we will enforce a rent cap on them. With our State Office for Tenant Protection, we are establishing an effective authority that will penalise breaches and enforce the law.

In 2021, the majority of Berliners made it clear that things cannot go on like this. The flats owned by large housing corporations, which are the subject of this referendum, belong under public responsibility. So that rents fall, buildings are maintained and people can stay. Others have hesitated. Sought excuses. Hid behind expert reports. Not us. This referendum will be implemented. The flats in question will be taken off the market and managed in the public interest. Housing will once again become what it is for you: a home.

Berlin for you.

But an affordable city doesn't end at your front door. Making Berlin affordable means making everyday life easier overall. Less stress. Less faffing about with the maths. Transport that works. Time to spare. Reliability in everyday life.

This includes ensuring that electricity, heating and water are affordable. That no one is left in the dark because a bill was too high. That no one has to choose between heating costs and food. That children don't freeze whilst doing their homework. We want Berlin to remain a place worth living in for future generations too. This is only possible if we do not turn a blind eye to the dangers posed by the environmental and climate crisis. Berlin must become a climate-resilient city with clean air, more parks, cool places to go in hot summers and an environmentally friendly energy supply that is affordable for everyone. That is why we will invest specifically in climate- and environmentally-friendly public infrastructure, in public transport, and in walking and cycling, and consistently implement the 'BaumEntscheid' (Tree Decision). The current Senate's policies do not take these tasks seriously.

Mobility must be accessible to everyone and must not depend on one's financial means. We will halt the price rises on the BVG and S-Bahn, retain the free school travel pass and bring back the 9-euro social ticket. So that everyone can get about easily and affordably. To work. To the doctor. To school. To see friends. To visit family. To the surrounding areas. All the way to the Baltic Sea. We will continue to build a needs-based, energy-efficient, local transport network that combines climate and land conservation with the needs of Berliners.

Public spaces are an integral part of an affordable city. Parks, squares and streets are, for many, the most important place to take a breather. Especially for people on a tight budget. For all those who don't have a large flat, no balcony, no garden, no little house in the countryside. For them, the parks are their garden. The street in front of their house is an extension of their living room. They are a safeguard against loneliness.

Our well-being and our health must not fall victim to the profit-driven motives of hospital groups. We want our hospitals to remain under local authority control and to be re-municipalised in those areas where private groups are shirking their responsibilities. As democratic socialists, we want public services to be consistently secured and expanded as community assets in the medium term, and linked to good working conditions.

Eating is more than just filling your stomach. It is a break, a chance to meet others, a time to be together. But food is becoming increasingly expensive in this city. For many, even a simple lunch is becoming a luxury. Those on a tight budget have to make a choice: enough food on their plate, or healthy food.

Cooking for themselves or sitting down with others. This should not be the case.

That is why we are setting up neighbourhood canteens in every district. Places where healthy, good food is affordable for everyone.

Neighbourhood canteens make everyday life easier and bring people together. They are places where people – not money – matter most.

This city needs prospects for young people. Affordable housing, good schools, apprenticeships and university places. The freedom to go their own way, and the spaces to do so: clubs, youth centres and sports facilities. Young people should be able to stay in Berlin. To complete an apprenticeship or a degree, to start a business, to try things out, to make mistakes, to change their minds – without fear of no longer being able to afford to live in this city. Young people embody the future of the city.

And Berlin needs to show respect for those who have worked all their lives and carried this city through the ups and downs of the past decades. Those growing old should be able to live with dignity in this metropolis. With a pension that is enough to live on. With affordable and good care. With a home they can keep. Without fear of poverty in old age. Without having to choose between heating and food.

A change in policy in this city requires a long-term vision for a left-wing metropolis. It is not enough simply to prevent the worst; we must expand the scope for progressive policies in the interests of those who keep the wheels turning here. That is why we are also working to build social and political alliances for progressive policies.

We do politics differently.

The Left is different: we are incorruptible and do not accept party donations from companies. Our MPs voluntarily cap

voluntarily cap their salaries and donate the difference to social causes. Die Linke knocks on doors in neighbourhoods to reach the many people who have turned their backs on politics, and focuses on everyday concerns. And Die Linke helps: Across the whole city, we offer legal and social advice or organise tenants' meetings to help people and inform them about their rights. We know the realities of bureaucratic harassment, racist bullying and brazen landlord tricks, and we help Berliners stand up against them. We are a party unlike any other.

The other politicians are out of touch with people's problems. The CDU is in cahoots with the rent mafia and stirs up hostility against our neighbours instead of solving problems. We don't make policy behind closed doors, but in full view of the people of our city. We create forums where those affected by politics become active participants – whether through local neighbourhood councils and tenants' meetings or summits for organised civil society. We build trust. Together, we organise ourselves against the rent mafia and corrupt politicians.

We tell it like it is – including when it comes to the budgetary situation. The failure to tax large fortunes, huge corporate profits and extremely high incomes fairly is driving the budgets of the state and districts into deficit. Whilst some have more money than they could ever spend, working people bear the lion's share of the tax burden. On top of that, the CDU-SPD coalition has used up all the reserves. We are fighting alongside the people, the trade unions, associations and service providers against the unfair cuts to essential social services. We will not agree to any social cuts or laws that make life more expensive or worse for those who keep our city running. What belongs to the people of Berlin remains in the hands of the people of Berlin: we will impose a ban on privatisation and, step by step, bring the areas of daily life back into public ownership through remunicipalisation and socialisation. Housing, local transport, care work and healthcare must serve us all – not the profits of private corporations. We will fight with all our might against price rises in

public services: the principle for public services is this: whether it's rent, the Underground, a museum or a swimming pool, prices must be affordable. We will increase the state's revenue and make full use of every opportunity to redistribute wealth from the top down. That is why we want to introduce a luxury villa tax; thorough tax audits will finally be carried out on the millionaires of this city, and tax breaks for the top 5 per cent will be scrapped.

We will do away with expensive prestige events and symbolic large-scale projects that benefit only a minority of the city's population. We will reduce spending on CCTV cameras and invest in social services instead. We must make our administration more digital and efficient and breathe life into administrative reform. So that investment can be made in our social city and a good infrastructure.

Everyone wants to govern; we want to bring about change. We do not accept the existing injustices, but advocate for a fundamentally different, democratic and socialist society. Instead of rearmament and the increasing militarisation of society, we are committed to peace-building.

On the way there, we are fighting for policies that directly improve the lives of Berliners. That is why we listen to Berliners and take their concerns and wishes on board. Our proposals have been costed and are feasible. We want to fight for them and make them a reality together with the people of Berlin. A social, liveable and solidarity-based Berlin is possible.

In doing so, we do not make promises that are impossible to fulfil. Our demands are ambitious, but also legally feasible and fully costed. We pursue honest politics and do not promise "the moon". We turn the concerns and wishes of Berliners into our policies.

Together, we are making history.

The fight for an affordable Berlin does not end on election night. That is when it really begins. Then it is a matter of implementing what has been agreed

to put this into practice and deliver on its promises. You can rely on Die Linke Berlin: a government in which Die Linke participates will bring about a genuine change in policy. It will implement the referendum

‘Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen G Co’. It will further develop the welfare state in Berlin. Our stance is clear: we will not participate in a government that pursues the privatisation of essential public services or cuts to social provision, or whose policies undermine the delivery of public services. Whether in the Bundesrat or the House of Representatives: we stand by our ‘no’ to rearmament and militarisation. The people of Berlin can count on that.

With the Berlin Left, you’ll be moving into the Red Town Hall. With Elif Eralp, the people of Berlin who want this city to remain what it is and become what it can be will be moving in. We don’t make policy over people’s heads, but with them.

Responsibility is shared. Criticism is part of the process. In the Red Town Hall, we will open the windows – go out, listen, and be approachable. We will take decisions to where they belong: to the city, to the neighbourhoods, to the districts – to where you live.

Berlin is open. People come here with different stories, languages, faiths, hopes and ways of life. Berlin is the city of freedom; it is rebellious and non-conformist – and that’s a good thing. Freedom of expression and freedom to demonstrate are non-negotiable. In recent years, they have been systematically curtailed through bans on demonstrations, police arbitrariness and political interference in art and culture. This must stop. No one should be afraid to speak their mind or attend a demonstration.

This city defies categorisation, and the CDU will not succeed in bringing Berlin to its knees.

No one should have to live in fear in our city. Together, we are creating a Berlin that offers protection. When the German far right rambles on about ‘remigration’, the people of Berlin – who experience diversity every day – know what a misanthropic plan lies behind it. We are tackling the real causes of rising rents, people falling ill and Berlin becoming increasingly dirty.

We are standing up to the shift to the right. By showing that there is another way. That left-wing politics can offer hope. That here in Berlin, even in times when solidarity is waning, we practise solidarity and stand together. That is why, together with all democratic and anti-fascist forces to keep the far right out of political power.

Berlin is a place where diversity has its place and respect is a given. You don't have to be the same as everyone else here to belong. This city thrives on the fact that people are different yet are all treated with equal respect. It is time for a new chapter for our city. This autumn, we will come together to elect and implement a different kind of politics: by Berliners, for Berliners. So that everyone who keeps the city running from dawn to dusk can live their lives here with dignity – regardless of their passport or job.

Berlin is our city. Your city. You keep this city running. On 20 September 2026, you'll take it into your own hands.

For a Berlin that protects you.

For a Berlin where we live together with dignity. For an affordable Berlin.

01 Living, housing, building

We all deserve a safe and affordable home – no matter what passport or job we have.

But the reality for millions of people in Berlin is very different. We're facing a rent crisis! And there's a reason for that: the rent mafia is ripping us off! The big property companies are hiking up rents and cheating us on heating bills – and Kai Wegner, whose election campaign was funded by the property lobby, is letting them get away with it.

That's why we want to join forces: for secure housing instead of rent rip-offs.

Mistsn and Wohnsn

State-owned housing companies

The state-owned housing companies (LWU), with their 400,000 flats are the key to ensuring long-term affordable housing in Berlin. We will ensure that rents remain affordable, that more affordable flats are built, that the housing stock and large housing estates are upgraded to meet social and environmental standards, and that more money is invested in local social and cultural infrastructure.

Rent caps and fair rents

As Governing Mayor, Kai Wegner ensured, within just 2.5 years, that rents were increased by up to 11 per cent in almost every state-owned flat. Many tenants simply can no longer afford this. Within the first 100 days of the new government, we intend to introduce a rent cap for the state-owned housing companies (LWU) on the basis of a Senate resolution. In doing so, we will enforce a one-year rent freeze. We will then enshrine in the Housing Supply Act

that rent increases will be capped at a maximum of 1 per cent per annum. Excessive rents that are more than 20 per cent above the local comparative rent will be reduced upon application. When flats are re-let, the rent will be capped at 10 per cent below the local comparative rent.

To ensure greater transparency, LWU tenants will be informed of the quality characteristics of their flat, so that they can more easily verify the correct calculation of the local comparative rent in accordance with the Berlin rent index.

Social re-letting quotas

Within the S-Bahn ring, 100 per cent of flats becoming vacant are to be allocated in future to households holding a housing entitlement certificate (up to WBS 220). Outside the ring, at least two-thirds of newly let flats will be let at particularly affordable rates.

Liveable large housing estates

We want the LWU to invest more in large housing estates and the local living environment. Common areas, play areas and green spaces should be upgraded. Wherever possible, the LWU's own properties should be used to provide good local amenities for daily needs and social services. Local residents and their representatives should be closely involved in the allocation of commercial premises.

No evictions due to rent arrears

Evictions due to rent arrears are ruled out by state-owned housing companies. Instead, socially acceptable solutions should be found.

Renovations that do not increase the total rent

Renovations should, as far as possible, be carried out in a way that does not affect rent levels. To this end, we are reintroducing a stricter cap on the apportionment of modernisation costs – a measure that has already proven its worth but was abolished by the current Senate. Costs may be apportioned by no more than 6 per cent, and the hardship provision applies to tenants even in the event of rent increases following modernisation works. Further details can be found in the ‘Construction’ section.

Expanding tenant democracy

Tenants’ right to have a say will be significantly strengthened. In collaboration with tenants’ councils and advisory boards, new guidelines will be drawn up for the allocation of commercial premises to ensure an optimal supply of everyday goods and services, as well as social and cultural provision.

Improved service

Customer service centres with fixed opening hours will be set up in all of LWU’s larger estates. A 48-hour guarantee applies for booking appointments. Instead of outsourcing repair work and other services to external firms, in-house staff (caretakers, etc.) will once again be employed across the board.

Reducing heating costs

Heating cost contracting will be terminated as soon as possible. The pricing practices of subsidiary companies responsible for heat supply will be reviewed. The LWU will be required to make heating and service charge statements more transparent in future. Heating costs will be automatically reduced by 15 per cent if the LWU have not installed heat meters in their housing stock. Tenants in all properties will be informed of their consumption during the year.

Effectively tackling homelessness

The sheltered housing market will be doubled to 2,500 flats per year.

In addition, 10 per cent of the state-owned and subsidised flats that are newly let or re-let are to be let to people affected by homelessness, subject to rent and occupancy controls. In this way, we are providing suitable housing for people at risk of homelessness or who are currently homeless, who have been forced to endure far too long in emergency accommodation.

Municipal Housing Construction Programme

Through our municipal housing construction programme, we ensure that local housing associations (LWUs) can build affordable housing on a long-term basis. We provide them with financial relief so that new-build projects no longer have to be financed from the rental income of existing tenants. Further details can be found in the 'Construction' section.

Accelerating and Prioritising Construction Projects

Large-scale construction projects are being developed too slowly. Projects that are well-connected, integrated into the urban fabric and environmentally sustainable will be prioritised and fast-tracked, whilst controversial projects will be subject to decisive action: redensification schemes that are incompatible with the neighbourhood will be halted. The LWU should create more affordable housing through the addition of extra storeys.

Accountability and commitment to the public good

Bonus payments for senior management will be linked to compliance with the cooperation agreement. The LWUs are to be permanently committed to public benefit objectives, and these are to be integrated into the Housing Supply Act.

Protection of public property

We rule out the sale of land, buildings and individual flats owned by the LWUs and advocate for a permanent ban on privatisation to be enshrined in the Berlin Constitution. We reject a greater reliance by state-owned enterprises on financial market instruments such as bonds.

Further acquisition of housing stock

The LWU should continue to purchase housing stock in order to increase the proportion of public-interest housing in Berlin. Purchase prices must take into account necessary maintenance and refurbishment costs.

Berlinovo

Berlinovo is to be integrated into the overall strategy as the seventh state-owned housing company. In future, Berlinovo should increasingly build and provide affordable housing for students, older people and other groups with specific needs.

Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen & Co

In September 2021, 59.1 per cent of Berliners voted in favour of the referendum 'Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen & Co'. This vote leaves no room for interpretation: Berlin wants to socialise housing and transfer 220,000 flats into public ownership.

From the outset, the Berlin Left has supported the call for socialisation. To ensure Berlin remains affordable, the referendum must now be implemented swiftly. That is why we want a socialisation bill to be passed as soon as possible. Whilst the Senate is squandering taxpayers' money, commissioning reports from property law firms on issues that have long since been clarified, and drafting a

nonsensical so-called ‘framework law’ – in other words, doing everything it can to avoid implementing the referendum – the initiative has, in an unprecedented move, presented a highly qualified draft bill that sets out in detail how socialisation works. We are making the implementation of this law one of our top priorities and will not allow any further delays. Any governing coalition involving Die Linke will, within the legislative term, draw up a binding Berlin socialisation act based on a timetable set out in the coalition agreement and on the draft submitted by the ‘Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen G Co’, which includes a deliberate break with the logic of private profit-making and provides for democratic control of the socialised housing stock.

Cracking down on brazen landlords

Berlin has a problem with brazen landlords and a Senate that is doing nothing about it. We will change that!

Combating rent gouging

In November 2024, Die Linke launched a rent gouging check: more than 100,000 households in Berlin alone have used it. The results showed that two-thirds of all rents are illegally high. The housing authorities are already dealing with over 4,000 cases, the housing authorities are already dealing with them. But in Berlin, there is a shortage of staff and no effective procedures to deal with them.

We want to combat rent gouging. As an immediate measure, we will set up a task force and provide staff to penalise illegal rents and reclaim overpaid rent. The procedure will be standardised across Berlin, modelled on the housing authority in Frankfurt am Main. Sanctions and fines for excessive rents will be effectively enforced. Tenants will be reimbursed for any rent they have overpaid.

For particularly serious cases of rent gouging, which are handled by the Public Prosecutor’s Office, we will establish a dedicated unit within the Main Department

for Economic Crime.

Putting a stop to rip-offs involving furnished flats

Furnished short-term accommodation has become increasingly prevalent in recent years. By providing furniture, unscrupulous landlords can make even higher profits. We will put a stop to this form of letting.

We will enforce a ban on furnished short-term accommodation in all Berlin neighbourhood protection zones. For new-build properties, we will work with the boroughs to develop guidelines on how to rule out the subsequent letting of furnished, fixed-term tenancies from the outset.

State-owned housing companies are not permitted to participate in this business model. Exceptions are made for flats for students and apprentices, provided that the rent is below the BAföG housing allowance or the affordability threshold for apprentices.

Flats are for living in – strictly penalise misuse

Berlin needs every affordable flat. Yet tens of thousands of flats are being misused as illegal holiday lets. Over 40,000 flats in Berlin stand empty. And the Senate stands by whilst affordable housing is being demolished everywhere to make way for expensive new-builds. We are declaring war on the misuse of housing!

Holiday flats

We want to put an end to the business of illegal holiday flats and are campaigning for a comprehensive ban on holiday flats in residential buildings. With the help of digital tools, it should be made easier

to identify and stop illegal listings, and to make the flats in question available again to Berliners as housing.

Vacancies

Vacant properties in times of a housing shortage are a scandal. We want to enshrine the electricity meter method in law and cooperate with electricity suppliers to uncover and penalise speculative vacancies. Properties that have stood empty for years must finally be repaired. To this end, we want to simplify the process of carrying out repairs on behalf of the owner and the appointment of trustees. The boroughs will receive a cost-covering increase in funding for such repairs. The state-owned housing companies are to be tasked with carrying out and implementing these repairs, as well as administering the trustee arrangements.

We are committed to decriminalising squatting. We want to abolish the so-called 'Berlin Line' and replace it with a Vacancy Act. Squatting in accommodation that has been vacant for at least one year should lead to a permanent right of residence, unless the owners make a binding commitment to make the accommodation available at socially acceptable rents within a limited period.

Demolition

Every year, hundreds of affordable flats are destroyed by demolition. Berlin needs a halt to demolition. In future, the demolition of affordable housing should only be permitted in strictly defined exceptional cases justified on social and environmental grounds. In such cases, at least 50 per cent of the flats in the subsequent new-build must be let at socially acceptable rents.

Rent Scan

We will analyse the market using digital tools to identify illegal rental listings. We will equip the relevant authorities so that, in suspicious cases, investigations can be launched and evidence admissible in court can be gathered. In this way, we will reclaim flat by flat for the people of Berlin.

ImmoScout and Co. into public ownership!

Platforms such as ImmobilienScout24 and others are making a fortune from a business model that has turned our homes into a commodity. Not only are these platforms exploiting desperate flat-seekers, but they are also actively contributing to rising rents in Berlin, as data from ImmoScout and Co is incorporated into Berlin's rent index. We want to break the power of the housing platforms and develop a tool to bring the housing search under public control, so that the process is socially just – and illegal rents are identified and prevented right from the start of the search.

Conversion and protection against eviction for owner-occupancy

Every year, thousands of people lose their homes due to evictions on the grounds of owner-occupancy and forced evictions. We want to strengthen protection against eviction and safeguard tenants from arbitrary action. In future, eviction notices should be served in person by court officials, so that tenants are informed in good time and beyond any doubt, and are made aware of the support available to them. We want Berlin's courts to regularly publish figures on notices of termination, claims for owner-occupancy and forced evictions to highlight the scale of the problem. Administrative assistance for forced evictions should be limited to what is strictly necessary – the boroughs must no longer be forced to play a part in the displacement of their own residents.

We want to permanently rule out the conversion of rented flats into owner-occupied flats and are campaigning for the removal of the time limit on Section

250 of the BauGB. Through a Bundesrat initiative, we aim to initiate a nationwide reform of the law on evictions for personal use: abuse of the system must finally be prevented. Personal use should be limited to first-degree relatives, and for those affected, significantly more cases of hardship – e.g. for older people, families with children and those who are ill – should regularly preclude a termination for personal use.

The establishment of a state-wide database on ‘personal use’ evictions should help to identify repeat cases and prevent systematic displacement. In addition, we call for a public transparency register showing how many conversions are taking place, when protection periods for notices of termination expire, and how the proceedings are progressing. State-owned housing companies should set aside a quota of flats to accommodate tenants who have been forcibly evicted. We want to carry out a legal review to determine whether people at risk of eviction and those who are already homeless can be rehoused on the basis of the right to housing, in order to prevent homelessness.

Secure Housing Act

1.16 million households who, on the basis of their income, would be entitled to a flat with a capped rent, are not even 100,000 suitable flats with a specified maximum rent (so-called social housing).

Under the Secure Housing Act, we are obliging large landlords to let a proportion of the flats that become vacant each year to people on low and middle incomes. Rents in these flats will be capped and based on the rent levels in social housing.

Landlords who own between 50 and 500 residential units will be required to let one in every three flats at an affordable rent. Those who own between 501 and 1,000 residential units will be required to let 40 per cent of their flats at an affordable rent. And those who own more than 1,000 residential units will be required to let as many as one in every two of the flats newly let each year

at affordable rents. These particularly large landlords also bear a special responsibility towards those who suffer most from the housing crisis in Berlin.

That is why they must allocate 10 per cent of the affordable flats to people in particularly urgent need of housing – for example, those in homeless shelters, women’s refugees and other support facilities. In this way, we will ensure that around 17,000 flats are let at affordable rents every year. By way of comparison: over the last ten years, significantly fewer subsidised flats have been built in new developments.

To enforce this law, we are establishing a State Office for Tenant Protection.

Transparency in the housing market

For a socially responsible housing policy, it is essential that we know more about who owns property in Berlin. That is why, in our Secure Housing Act, we are already laying the foundations for a transparent overview of who owns which properties in Berlin. Property owners will be obliged to provide the State Office for Tenant Protection with the relevant details. Building on this, we aim to establish a public housing and rent register in the long term. This register will contain information on the actual owners, the type of tenancy, rent levels, facilities, location and the energy efficiency of the flats.

Expanding tenant advice services

For us, transparency also means that tenants know their rights and are able to enforce them. As The Left, we already offer countless consultation hours and support services across Berlin.

During our last term in government, we on the Left also secured the introduction of free tenancy law advice in all boroughs. This service has been very well received and is to be expanded through

further locations, longer opening hours and outreach information services. We want to inform all Berliners about the advisory services available, both by post and through a wide-ranging public awareness campaign. Funding cuts made by the current Senate to district-level tenant advice services or advisory services in areas subject to social housing protection will be reversed.

Improving access to housing support

For us, help for tenants does not begin only when there is a dispute with the landlord. We want to simplify access to services and support provided by Berlin's local authorities by reducing staff workloads and introducing modern procedures for people both in front of and behind the counter.

Housing benefit

Due to the federal government's misguided housing and social policies, more and more people are entitled to housing benefit. Whilst we criticise housing benefit as a subsidy for excessive rents, we consider it absolutely essential, at least until the introduction of a nationwide rent cap.

Anyone currently applying for housing benefit faces an average wait of eleven weeks; in some districts, applicants must wait for over 20 weeks. To reduce processing times, we want to streamline the process, examine ways to cut red tape in the application procedure, and provide the relevant authorities with more staff.

Housing Eligibility Certificate

A housing eligibility certificate (WBS) entitles the holder to move into a subsidised flat with a fixed maximum rent and is often necessary to have any chance at all of finding an affordable flat in Berlin. However, anyone applying for a WBS to help with their flat search currently has to wait up to 16 weeks, whilst

People living in shared accommodation cannot even apply for a WBS. We want to introduce a two-week guarantee for the WBS, meaning that applicants should receive a WBS no later than two weeks after submitting their application, provided all the necessary documents have been submitted in full. We want to centralise the processing of WBS applications at the State Office for Tenant Protection. To reduce the burden on both citizens and the authorities, we are aiming for the WBS to be valid for two years. In the case of specific housing offers that can only be rented with a WBS, an emergency WBS should be issued within 48 hours. To speed up and simplify the processing of WBS applications, we intend to set up a commission of experts to draw up proposals to this end. Furthermore, in future, shared accommodation groups should also be able to apply for the WBS, regardless of family ties or partnership status.

Heating costs

Hundreds of thousands of Berliners are unable to heat their homes adequately due to a lack of funds. Many do not know how to settle their high arrears. At the same time, unscrupulous landlords and energy suppliers are making huge profits through opaque and incorrect heating cost bills. We want to ensure that no one has to sit in a cold flat, and we will put a stop to heating cost rip-offs wherever possible.

We will supplement the free, district-based tenant advice centres with targeted advisory services on the subject of heating.

Through a heating costs fund, we want to provide quick and unbureaucratic support to low-income Berliners when they can no longer afford their heating bills. Our model is the heating costs fund in Munich, from which eligible households can, upon application, receive a grant towards the costs of heating and hot water amounting to 700 euros for those living alone or 300 euros for those sharing a home.

Security Deposit Fund

As long as landlords keep driving up rents, security deposit requirements for new tenants will also rise. Claims amounting to several thousand euros can quickly accumulate. This is often no longer affordable. Anyone who has finally found a suitable home after an exhausting search for accommodation should not be prevented from moving in by exorbitant security deposit demands.

Following the example of other cities, we are helping those affected through a deposit fund. We provide people on low and middle incomes with a deposit subsidy in the form of an interest-free loan.

Secure housing for all

The housing crisis in Berlin affects all Berliners. Not everyone is affected in the same way or to the same extent. It is clear to us that we must champion the interests of all those affected equally and seek solutions tailored to each individual situation. We can only achieve a secure and affordable home in the red metropolis of Berlin by working together.

Preventing tax waste through rent gouging – protecting the poorest

With its reforms to the citizen's income scheme, the federal government is taking a reprehensible stance against the most vulnerable and provoking a further rise in people losing their homes and becoming homeless. We take the state's duty to provide decent housing for all Berliners seriously and are doing everything in our power to put this into

. People on social security benefits, in particular, struggle to find a flat at reasonable rents. The fact that the current Senate is failing to adjust the guideline rates for accommodation costs (Implementing Regulation on Housing, or 'AV Wohnen' for short) at a time when rents are skyrocketing is out of touch with reality and dangerous. We will adjust the benchmark figures to reflect the actual conditions on the Berlin housing market. We will reintroduce the Senate's

for the membership fees of social security recipients in tenants' organisations. It is often particularly difficult for people on social security benefits to defend themselves against excessive rents. The costs arising from excessive rents are borne by the federal government and, to an ever-increasing extent, by the State of Berlin. At the same time, nowhere do Berlin's local authorities have such accurate data on tenancy arrangements as they do for households where the authority covers the rental costs. We will ensure that the State of Berlin finally makes use of this data and proactively punishes rent gouging and reduces illegally high rents.

Providing targeted support for women* and families in the housing market

Women, trans* people, gender-diverse people, single parents and people with a migrant background are disproportionately affected by the housing crisis, hidden homelessness and discrimination in the allocation of housing.

Everyone has the right to safe, non-discriminatory and self-determined housing. We want to introduce anonymised, discrimination-sensitive monitoring schemes at state-owned housing companies to highlight unequal allocation practices.

We are committed to ensuring that single parents have reliable access to housing that meets their needs. When letting properties under the WBS scheme, kitchen-diners must not be counted as full rooms. Clear standards are needed: an adequate number of separate rooms for adults and children. When allocating state-owned and subsidised flats, particular priority should be given to groups with specific needs, such as single parents on low incomes.

We want to consistently combat racist and anti-family discrimination in the allocation of housing. This includes stricter controls on state-owned housing companies and subsidised projects, as well as the use of anonymised application procedures.

We are committed to expanding municipal and public-interest housing stock that explicitly provides for programmes and quotas for single parents, women's and queer housing projects, as well as intergenerational and neighbourhood care networks. When planning new neighbourhoods, women's, migrant and queer organisations must be involved on a mandatory basis in order to promote neighbourhoods that are sensitive to discrimination and foster a sense of community.

Making it easier for young people to start a self-determined life

Housing must not impoverish young people and students! We will launch a programme for the construction of student and trainee halls of residence through expanded credit facilities and public grants, as well as the conversion of existing buildings. Furthermore, we urge public housing associations to increase the number of flats allocated to students. We also want to make the federal 'Junges Wohnen' programme available for refurbishments, particularly of student and trainee halls of residence.

To safeguard students' living conditions, we will continue to campaign at federal level for a reform of the BAföG scheme that makes it independent of parental income. The eligibility criteria must be significantly expanded; for example, changing degree programmes must not result in the loss of eligibility; furthermore, the higher housing costs in major cities such as Berlin must be taken into account. The current housing and living conditions of students, as well as the state of buildings and the range of courses on offer, require a high degree of mobility on the part of those affected. We are therefore committed to supporting affordable mobility, for example in the form of a socially equitable term ticket.

A matter of respect – safe and decent housing in old age

Berlin is ageing, but many older people can no longer afford their rent. They live in flats that are not accessible, or they become isolated because neighbourhood meeting places have been displaced

. We want all Berliners to be able to live safely, independently and as part of the community in old age. Through a new funding programme, we aim to make the conversion of housing to meet the needs of older people socially equitable and ensure its affordability by introducing rent and occupancy controls.

State-owned housing associations should appoint loneliness officers who, particularly in larger housing estates, visit older tenants at home and organise activities suitable for older people within the neighbourhood.

In order to create a more affordable alternative to private and expensive care homes, Berlinovo is to establish its own assisted living division. Through a Bundesrat initiative, we are campaigning for a ban on evictions on the grounds of owner's personal use and for a ban on the eviction of older people. District housing authorities, in collaboration with social housing organisations, should offer regular on-site appointments in larger housing estates with many older tenants to assist with applications for and provide advice on housing benefit, in order to make the application process easier for the many pensioners who are eligible.

Housing swaps and 'housing for help' schemes

Many tenants live in flats that no longer suit their life circumstances: families need more space, whilst older people often live in flats that are too large. At the same time, there is a shortage of affordable housing. That is why we want to make flat swapping significantly easier.

Tenants at the LWU should be able to carry over their previous rent per square metre to their new flat in the event of a successful flat swap. Moderate adjustments to the rent should only be permitted if the quality of the accommodation differs noticeably in terms of fittings or location. In the event of a successful flat swap, the LWU should cover the reasonable removal costs and provide support through a newly established removal management service. The companies will provide regular information on the possibility of flat swaps. New-build flats can thus be used specifically to set swap chains in motion and

make more efficient use of existing housing stock. The state is to compensate housing associations for any loss of income through equity grants.

Through a state programme entitled ‘Multi-Generational Living’, we aim to support households that choose to live together voluntarily. We will enhance the LWU’s existing flat-swapping portal, www.inberlinwohnen.de, following an evaluation, and will also create further suitable structures to facilitate more flat-swapping arrangements, particularly within neighbourhoods and between LWUs. We are considering introducing legislation to oblige private housing companies to offer flat-swapping schemes. Anyone who decides to share a larger flat or to move into an existing property with younger or older people should receive a grant to cover moving, renovation and initial set-up costs. Alongside this, a housing agency should provide advice and act as an intermediary on ways to make better use of housing stock. It should inform owners in single- and two-family housing estates about funding – for example, for the conversion of granny flats or renovations – as well as about rent guarantees, thereby tapping into previously untapped housing potential.

Through a Bundesrat initiative, we intend to campaign at federal level for a right to swap homes: tenants should be allowed to take over each other’s existing tenancy agreements without any change to the rent. In addition, we are calling for a federal programme to support low-income households when they move house.

Better living in the neighbourhood – our programme for large housing estates

The 24 large housing estates are home to hundreds of thousands of Berliners. Yet many suffer from neglected outdoor spaces, litter, poor lighting, a lack of neighbourhood meeting places and inadequate provision of social infrastructure. We want to revitalise the large housing estates – and thereby make them socially inclusive, clean and safe.

Through the 'Better living in the neighbourhood' action programme, we aim to renovate the housing stock in the large housing estates without increasing rents. We want to promote the enhancement of green spaces, the expansion of sports facilities and neighbourhood services, and ensure better lighting. Through regular neighbourhood days for bulky waste and clean-up campaigns organised by the BSR, we aim to improve cleanliness in the neighbourhoods. To foster neighbourly cooperation and voluntary engagement, the action programme aims to expand inclusive, intercultural participation schemes.

Neighbourhood canteens for affordable food

We want to open neighbourhood canteens across the city. The canteens should offer healthy meals from 3 euros – so that everyone can eat their fill. At least one meal a day must be entirely plant-based. With our neighbourhood canteens, we want to create social spaces that provide good food at affordable prices, where the neighbourhood can come together. Berlin needs affordable food for everyone, more public canteens and social spaces to combat poverty and loneliness.

That is exactly where we want to start with our neighbourhood canteens! We intend to fund the establishment and operation of a total of 20 neighbourhood canteens with 10 million euros annually.

Social Housing Rescue Programme

Since 2021, Berlin has lost almost 120,000 social housing units because rent and occupancy controls have expired. Particularly in the case of private landlords, affected tenants face the threat of sharp rent increases or eviction on the grounds of the landlord's own use once these social controls expire. A massive wave of displacement is sweeping through the city.

We want to launch a rescue programme for social housing that encompasses numerous measures in the areas of new-build housing, remunicipalisation and regulation. These include the launch

a municipal building programme, the socialisation of large housing corporations, the passing of the Secure Housing Act, the expansion of social re-letting quotas for state-owned housing companies, and the reform of cooperative building land development. In addition, state-owned housing companies are to make targeted purchases of housing stock where rent and occupancy controls are due to expire, and a support programme is to be launched to extend such controls.

Degree programme in non-profit housing management

We want to restructure the housing sector to serve the public good. This requires more well-trained people who understand how a non-profit housing and property sector operates. Currently, universities and higher education institutions teach only the fundamentals of the profit-oriented property sector.

We want to establish the first institute of its kind in Germany, as well as a new degree programme in non-profit housing management. This will enable the training of (future) staff for state-owned, co-operative and public-interest-oriented organisations.

Do not let the federal government shirk its responsibilities

Many problems in the Berlin housing market are the result of failures on the part of federal governments over the past decades – and can only be resolved at this level. That is why we are exerting pressure in the Bundesrat for a social housing policy.

We want to introduce a nationwide rent cap and will continue to campaign for this through a Bundesrat initiative and public pressure. By introducing a rent cap for commercial premises, we aim to ensure that small craft businesses, childcare centres, late-night shops and Berlin's club culture are protected from ever-rising rents and displacement.

Regardless of whether the federal government introduces a rent cap, we will apply all tried-and-tested methods

to keep the scope for rent increases as small as possible.

To put a stop to property speculation, we are campaigning for the reintroduction of the right of first refusal at purchase prices that enable letting in the public interest. Share deals, through which companies such as Vonovia avoid paying billions in tax revenue, should be prohibited.

Construction

The main thing is to build a lot – and, if in doubt, at a high cost ‘Build! Build! Build!’ is the prevailing response to the crisis in the housing market. Yet this mantra has failed. Whilst the number of households and flats has continued to align, rents have nevertheless skyrocketed and affordable housing is in short supply. The reason? The wrong sort of housing is being built. Only a very small proportion of new builds receive social housing funding. We want to turn new-build housing on its head and build what Berlin actually needs: permanently affordable flats with a high standard of living, constructed in a climate-friendly and environmentally sustainable manner.

Municipal Housing Programme

The state-owned housing associations are the key players in the provision of affordable and social housing. However, not only are they building too little, but their projects are also too expensive. Rents for privately financed new-builds are as high as 20 euros per square metre, making them completely unaffordable for most Berliners. To finance new-builds and modernisation, the current Senate has allowed massive rent increases, thereby negating the rent-stabilising effect of the public housing stock.

We say: Put an end to expensive municipal new-builds and rising rents! We want to boost municipal and affordable housing construction, reduce building costs, set environmental standards and keep rents in these flats stable. To this end, we are launching a municipal housing programme.

We want to inject up to 2 billion euros of equity capital annually into the state-owned housing companies to finance the construction of 7,500 municipal flats each year. Our programme will enable these companies to build 100 per cent permanently affordable flats without causing rents in their existing stock to rise.

We will set rents on a sliding scale between 6 euros and 12 euros per square metre, depending on the income of eligible households. We will set the income threshold for eligibility for such a flat so that two-thirds of households in Berlin are eligible.

We aim to harness synergies between the state-owned housing companies and, as a first step, establish a joint planning subsidiary to carry out strategic planning and award framework contracts. Through joint tenders and long-term partnerships with suppliers of prefabricated building components, we aim to reduce construction costs and make building more efficient. Cost-reduction strategies are to be developed on the basis of construction cost monitoring modelled on the Hamburg approach. In the medium term, we aim to establish a municipal building agency that will oversee not only new municipal construction but also energy-efficiency refurbishments, age-appropriate conversions, and the construction of new schools, childcare centres and administrative buildings.

We want to introduce a minimum procurement quota for ecological and renewable building materials in new municipal buildings and are aiming for EH40 as a target figure. To promote innovation in new municipal buildings, we want to see more open tendering processes for construction projects and wish to encourage more experimental colour schemes in new municipal buildings. In terms of floor plans for new municipal buildings, more creative layouts should allow for more communal areas and meeting spaces.

To implement the municipal building programme, we want to establish a steering and planning unit within the Senate Department for Urban Development, Construction and Housing, which will carry out an ongoing analysis of housing needs and focus on securing planning permission for public land, as well as speeding up planning procedures and transport links until the site is ready for construction. The planning unit will also drive forward the development of new urban neighbourhoods.

Municipal Renovation Programme

Energy-efficient building refurbishment hangs like the sword of Damocles over the housing sector. With the completion of municipal heating planning in 2026, a binding roadmap is needed for the energy-efficient refurbishment of the public building stock and municipal housing stock.

We therefore propose a municipal refurbishment programme that sets out a clear refurbishment roadmap for the municipal housing stock and, as with new-build projects, significantly increases equity grants for energy-efficiency refurbishments. To this end, we want to increase the refurbishment rate among state-owned housing companies and bring flats with the poorest energy efficiency (worst-performing buildings) up to a standard that prevents further cost spirals for tenants and also protects the climate.

To ensure that energy-efficiency refurbishments are socially acceptable, including for private landlords, we want to increase funding for the Social Housing Refurbishment Scheme, thereby encouraging the introduction of rent and occupancy controls in connection with energy-efficiency refurbishments. We want to abolish the refurbishment levy.

Co-operative Land Development

To date, private housing developers have only built affordable housing – and then only to a limited extent – when required to do so by the State of Berlin and the boroughs through the Cooperative Building Land Development scheme.

We want to further develop the Cooperative Building Land Development scheme, following the example of other cities. For affected construction projects, rather than the current requirement to build 30 per cent temporary social housing, at least two-thirds of the site must be developed with rent- and occupancy-controlled flats, half of which must be built under the first funding stream. Alternatively, 50 per cent of the building site must be transferred to the

State of Berlin at a value unaffected by planning, so that it can use the municipal housing programme to build permanently affordable housing there.

We want to significantly reduce funding for private housing projects and introduce an extension of the commitment period for housing subsidies to at least 50 years, following the Hamburg model.

Fast-Track Building Act/Construction Turbo

We will accelerate the planning and construction of housing and associated infrastructure by addressing staff shortages in the boroughs, digitising processes and prioritising early and genuine public participation, thereby preventing years of disputes and legal proceedings. We regard initiatives such as the 'Faster Building Act' or the

'Construction Turbo' as counterproductive restrictions on planning procedures, which are primarily suited to undermining democratic, social and environmental standards. We will therefore apply the new federal legal requirements in such a way that the rights of the House of Representatives and the district councils are not undermined, and that any projects serve the urban development policy objectives of the State of Berlin. Essentially, this means: the relevant councils retain the upper hand. Projects must be consistent with existing local development objectives. Projects must meet the requirements for cooperative building land development. Projects must take account of the local provision of social infrastructure. And projects must not deviate from climate and environmental protection standards.

International Building Exhibition

An International Building Exhibition can be an opportunity for Berlin if it offers an innovative concept and further develops a vision for an affordable, liveable and climate-just city.

For us, the fundamental principles of an international building exhibition include giving priority to conversion and refurbishment over demolition and new-build, as well as new-build housing with permanently affordable rents for broad sections of the population, provided by organisations dedicated to the public good, in particular state-owned housing companies, cooperatives, foundations or the Mietshäusersyndikat. Unfortunately, the Senate's current plans do not provide for these guiding principles, which is why we reject them. We are open to an international building exhibition that makes a significant contribution to a vision of an affordable, liveable and climate-just city.

Co-operatives and organisations serving the public good

The approximately 200,000 co-operative flats are key pillars of the social housing provision and help to keep rents in check across the entire market. Through innovative floor plans and architectural design, they offer attractive forms of housing.

We want to strengthen the co-operatives. To resume the dialogue with the co-operatives, we intend to appoint a new co-operative liaison officer. We want to increase and reform support for co-operatives. To give greater consideration to smaller co-operatives and alternative, public-interest-oriented organisations, such as the Miethäusersyndikat, we intend to examine whether funding should be linked to the specific purpose of the beneficiary organisations rather than to their legal form.

Leasehold agreements and subordinated loans are to be recognised as viable equity capital by the Investment Bank of Berlin (IBB). Through housing subsidy schemes, we aim to ensure the construction of affordable housing by co-operatives and to adjust the IBB's funding criteria so that smaller co-operatives or other organisations working in the public interest can also access funding and are not disadvantaged when competing with private developers.

We want to improve access to state-owned land and allocate plots to co-operatives on a long-term lease basis, on terms based on the revenue generated by affordable

or rent-controlled flats. In the new urban neighbourhoods, we want to reserve plots of land for co-operative housing and revive the idea of a co-operative campus. To enable smaller, public-interest organisations, such as foundations or the Mietshäusersyndikat, to access public property, we want to reform the planning consultation processes and make them more accessible. We want to support initiatives for alternative and community-based housing and construction projects and strengthen existing advisory and support structures, such as Co-Housing Berlin and the Netzwerkagentur GenerationenWohnen.

In future, we want to link support for co-operatives to the substantive purpose of the beneficiary organisations and no longer solely to their legal form. In doing so, we aim above all to provide greater support to smaller co-operatives and alternative, public-interest organisations, such as the Mietshäusersyndikat. The funding scheme is to be further developed and supplemented with criteria relating to self-governance, co-determination and the permanent exclusion of privatisation. Leasehold agreements and subordinated loans are to be recognised as viable equity capital by the Investitionsbank Berlin (IBB). In the area of housing construction funding, we intend to adapt the funding criteria so that smaller co-operatives and other organisations dedicated to the public good can also access funding.

Conversion of commercial to residential space

From a climate policy perspective, prioritising conversion over new-build is essential; yet, to date, the potential for conversion has been far too underutilised, despite millions of square metres of office and commercial space standing empty. We intend to largely prevent the demolition of office and commercial premises through an amendment to the Building Regulations and to significantly expand the conversion of vacant and unused office and commercial space. To this end, we intend to develop strategies to increase the conversion of vacant commercial premises into affordable housing, and to launch a regional funding programme to link the conversion process to the introduction of rent and occupancy controls.

Sustainable Construction

In future, construction waste should be recycled as effectively as possible and building components reused. Berlin will become a ‘circular city’, partly through a municipal re-use building materials depot. In renovation and new-build projects, recyclability must be guaranteed wherever possible. We will promote the use of circular building materials in municipal construction projects. Demolition and reuse concepts are to be made mandatory for public buildings. When awarding contracts for construction and planning services for public building projects, we intend to incorporate criteria for resource-efficient construction.

In new builds and refurbishments, there should be greater use of renewable raw materials. To this end, financial incentives will be introduced for the use of alternative, renewable and regional building materials. In doing so, the greenhouse gas impact of different building materials must be taken into account. We intend to amend the building regulations so that concrete – a major contributor to climate change – may, as far as possible, only be used where it is strictly required by law (), for example due to fire safety regulations, and so that the use of reused building components is facilitated.

02 Urban development

For a city for everyone

Our vision is a city that serves its people, not investors. An affordable city where people, nature and their needs take centre stage. A city without new office towers and skyscrapers, where there is no speculation on land. A city free from displacement and demolition, but one characterised by regeneration, conversion and the utilisation of existing buildings. A city of short distances, with housing and workplaces, local amenities, biodiversity and public social infrastructure in the neighbourhood. A city with sufficient green spaces and open spaces, fairly distributed and accessible to all Berliners close to where they live.

Developing the city together

Openly and for everyone, not behind closed doors; at an early stage and with an open-ended approach – this is how we want to shape socio-ecological urban regeneration together with the people of Berlin. The residents know best how their city should develop. For us, the redistribution of decision-making power to Berliners is a crucial foundation for an empowering culture of participation, comprehensive transparency and the political influence of civil society. Protests, campaigns and instruments of direct democracy such as ‘100% Tempelhofer Feld’, the ‘Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen G Co’ initiative, ‘Kotti G Co.’ or the ‘BaumEntscheid’ have played a prominent role in recent years. We take the concerns of initiatives and committed neighbours seriously and work with them to develop concepts for cooperative urban development. That is why we will implement referendums and continue to develop and build upon the existing neighbourhood management scheme. We want to strengthen the neighbourhood management process as an exemplary means of democratic participation, particularly with regard to its integration into district-level decision-making and funding structures. For areas where neighbourhood management is coming to an end, we want to ensure the continuation of structurally significant projects and provide reliable funding for them. Building on our experience with the Haus der Statistik and the

Kreuzberg Town Hall Block (Dragoner site), we aim to further institutionalise cooperative development between the State of Berlin, the boroughs, public-benefit organisations and civil society organisations. Budgetary lines with clearly defined earmarking will be established for civil society urban development projects. We support spaces for solidarity, social interaction, self-organisation and services for the common good. We promote real-world laboratories for civil society-led urban development and aim, in the long term, to establish such a venue in every district.

The guidelines on public participation must be revised and consistently applied. Structures such as the Urban Policy Initiatives Forum and the Round Table on Property Policy must be further developed so that they can negotiate and implement viable solutions for initiatives and projects under threat. We want public participation to be sensitive to issues of discrimination, low-threshold and accessible to all Berliners. In particular, we want an informal participation process to be carried out before the start of every development plan procedure, in order to discuss the objectives and broad outlines of the planning with local residents in an open-ended manner.

The existing structures should be adapted so that, in every borough, a designated contact person within the local authority is appointed to act as an interface between the local authority and Berliners. Furthermore, we want to launch a pilot project in which collective ‘third places of participation’, funded by the Senate, are created in the form of public-common partnerships. Neighbours can use these spaces in a self-organised manner, with low barriers to entry and without any obligation to consume, to discuss ideas together – this strengthens self-efficacy and social cohesion.

We want a spirit of cooperation between the Senate and the boroughs, rather than repeatedly stripping the boroughs of their responsibility for development plans.

We support the call by the Berlin Initiative Forum on Urban Policy for a ‘task force for threatened spaces of Berlin’s urban diversity and socio-cultural life’ to be set up in the short term, as well as a long-term

‘arbitration body’ for mediation and ongoing support in disputes relating to urban development policy.

Organising a social and caring city

We need a coordinated approach to urban planning in the city: the construction of new housing must go hand in hand with the development of social and green infrastructure, alongside transport links and commercial spaces that ensure the provision of everyday amenities. The guiding principle for the whole of Berlin is the ‘Caring City’: a city of short distances, where people live and work, with local amenities and public social infrastructure in the neighbourhood. Here, the focus is on people’s needs and collective care work – no longer on production and profits.

We want to launch pilot projects to create care centres designed to bridge gaps in local provision, to provide people in the neighbourhood with access to and space for collective care work and self-organisation, and where art, culture, health and other public-interest causes can flourish. This creates so-called ‘third places’ where people can come together without having to buy anything, and where things can be repaired, shared and borrowed. This mutual local support in everyday life enables a resource-efficient way of living and increases the crisis resilience of our neighbourhoods. The specific use of these spaces must be developed through a low-threshold participatory process, in which the neighbourhood has a say and existing local services and infrastructure are incorporated. We want to publicly promote the establishment of such spaces and safeguard their use through reliable agreements between civil society and the public sector (Public-Common/Public-Civic Partnerships). In this way, with comparatively little effort, we create a social and ecological infrastructure that is closely integrated into everyday life, affordable, resource-efficient and crisis-proof. In particular, we want to transfer vacant shopping centres into public ownership and operate them collectively and democratically through neighbourhood care committees.

A viable financing model can be developed through a mix of commercial and public-interest tenancies. Our medium-term aim is to establish enough community care centres so that the ‘city of short distances’ becomes a reality for all Berliners.

The neighbourhood care centres should provide low-threshold services, including for homeless people and those without health insurance, as well as children’s and youth clubs, support for single parents, older people and family carers, and neighbourhood canteens and cafés with affordable prices.

This includes adequate staffing levels, short distances, accessible facilities and a well-developed public transport network, as well as free-to-use toilet facilities. For all newly planned residential buildings – whether in the council housing sector or the private sector – there should be at least one communal room for tenants, so that children’s birthday parties, neighbourhood initiatives, building-wide car boot sales and other needs finally have a space.

New Land-Use Plan

The Land Use Plan (FNP) from 1994, which is now outdated, is to be fundamentally revised during the coming legislative period with broad public participation. The aim is to align the FNP with the requirements of climate protection and climate adaptation, as well as with the need to secure housing. It will be integrated into a climate-just planning approach for urban, landscape and open-space planning and embedded within a city-wide open-space strategy with specific phased targets. In doing so, net-zero land sealing will be achieved by 2030 at the latest, and the preservation of ecologically valuable open spaces (e.g. green spaces, parks, cemeteries, allotments, forests, fields, farmland and meadows, landscape areas and, in particular, the Tempelhofer Feld) will be safeguarded through planning. The Tempelhofer Feld will be designated as a green space. The development momentum in Berlin predicted by population forecasts must be channelled through planning towards existing building land, in particular through

the use of sealed brownfield sites. We intend to gradually replace the 1958/60 Land Use Plan – which is based on a completely outdated urban planning concept and applies to West Berlin – with new local development plans. We intend to secure the green spaces included in the Landscape Programme through binding planning legislation.

-> see Chapter '12 Climate, Environment, Animal Welfare' on page 192

Further developing building planning

When drawing up new local development plans, we apply high social and environmental standards, as well as high professional standards of urban planning. At the federal level, Berlin supports a fresh initiative for open-ended sectoral development plans. These will be used to set quotas for social housing in areas without a development plan, replacing the previous practice. The boroughs will be provided with more staff and financial resources for drawing up development plans.

We intend to use local development plans to safeguard and preserve cultural and social infrastructure. We are also committed to ensuring that guiding criteria sensitive to discrimination are made binding in planning processes.

We want to preserve and safeguard caravan sites and houseboats. In future, a garage development plan will be drawn up for the management and development of former GDR garage sites, with the aim of conducting transparent participatory processes involving local residents and garage owners. Local needs are to be taken into account, vacancy rates avoided, and allocation procedures applied that do justice to the developed usage concepts.

Driving forward socio-ecological urban regeneration through planning

We will utilise all options available under building and planning law, as well as urban development contracts, to drive forward climate protection and climate adaptation. We intend to reform the State Building Regulations and

abolish the minimum distances for photovoltaic (PV) systems on roofs. We want to facilitate the installation of solar systems on, and the greening of, the façades of residential and commercial buildings. In new buildings, greywater reuse is to be an integral part of the building's design. We will incorporate greywater and rainwater reuse into the building regulations.

For new developments, we will set a minimum proportion of green spaces. We intend to dismantle infrastructure from the car-centric city that is no longer needed and repurpose it for socio-ecological use in line with the vision of a climate-resilient city. The prevention and minimisation requirements of the Building Code must be strictly observed. We will not grant planning permission for new developments of detached or semi-detached houses. We will strengthen the district planning authorities.

New urban neighbourhoods

The new urban neighbourhoods (NSQ) are of particular importance for the creation of affordable housing for Berliners. In contrast to small-scale and conflict-ridden infill development in existing neighbourhoods, we intend to prioritise the planning and development of the new urban quarters, particularly on land owned by the state. We will prioritise the NSQs and significantly accelerate the development of those with particularly high potential for urban compatibility and new affordable housing, such as the Schumacher Quarter on the site of the former Tegel Airport. Criteria are to be established for the new urban quarters, e.g.

requirements for transport links, space-saving and multifunctional construction, the involvement of civil society, and accompanying green infrastructure. Every urban quarter must be equipped with a variety of communal spaces for residents' everyday social activities. On privately-owned building plots, either 50 per cent of the land must be ceded to the State of Berlin to be developed with permanently affordable housing, or two-thirds of the residential floor area must be built as rent-controlled and occupancy-restricted housing. On publicly-owned building plots, we want to enable 100 per cent rent-controlled and occupancy-restricted new-build housing.

We oppose the development of new urban neighbourhoods on natural areas worthy of protection, such as moors, or on allotment gardens. Public transport links for new neighbourhoods must be prioritised. We rule out the privatisation of land. We will reassess the target figures for new housing construction. We also call for the provision of affordable housing for students, apprentices and similar groups in need to be enshrined in the development plan from the outset.

Social, cultural, technical, transport and health infrastructure must adapt to the uneven population trends across Berlin's twelve districts. Some districts are developing very dynamically, precisely because of the new urban neighbourhoods. In particular, the Social Infrastructure Concepts (SIKo) must be further developed, and the necessary requirements must be met in a timely manner, both in terms of construction and organisation.

Carefully developing our city centres

The city centre must be a living space for everyone and needs to offer a high quality of life. We want to work together with the city's residents to further develop Berlin's Mitte district, between Alexanderplatz and the River Spree, as a public space that is as free as possible from private and commercial use. We will continue and complete the climate-resilient redevelopment of the Rathausforum/Marx-Engels-Forum that is already underway. Alexanderplatz is a central location for many Berliners. To restore the square's appeal as a place to spend time, we want to facilitate a mix of uses, particularly cultural ones, and ensure an attractive design. At the foot of the TV Tower, public uses beyond consumerism should predominate. The State Central Library (ZLB) is also to move into the Galeria department store. Cultural uses must predominate in the building. In the long term, the library premises must become the property of the state. We want to develop the Molkenmarkt into an attractive neighbourhood with affordable housing and cost-effective spaces for art and culture. State-owned plots there are to be developed exclusively by state-owned housing associations. We want to preserve the ruins of the monastery church as a place of art and remembrance; we reject any historicist development of the

the adjacent green space. For the site of the Bauakademie, we are aiming, through an open competition, for a new building that meets today's requirements for climate-friendly and ecological construction. In City West, too, we reject the uncontrolled proliferation of high-rise buildings. Instead, we need to enhance public spaces through more non-commercial facilities, leisure, culture and sport, and to protect affordable housing in neighbouring neighbourhoods. Breitscheidplatz must retain its function as a prominent landmark in the city's skyline. We want to launch a new City West masterplan that prioritises the common good. We continue to oppose the plans to demolish the Galeria Karstadt buildings at Hermannplatz and on the Ku'damm and to erect monumental new buildings in their place, with the massive negative side-effects this is expected to have on the surrounding urban area. We are committed to preserving the Galeria department store sites there and to the careful redevelopment of the properties with the involvement of local residents and neighbouring businesses.

Strictly regulate high-rise construction

We do not share Kai Wegner's vision of a 'striking skyline' for Berlin, as the high construction costs associated with high-rise buildings usually mean that affordable housing cannot be created. We oppose measures to facilitate the planning and construction of high-rise buildings for additional offices or luxury flats, and we want to revise the high-rise development model.

The sightlines from the main thoroughfares leading towards Alexanderplatz to the TV Tower must be preserved. Instead of massive high-rise development, we advocate for careful development based on existing buildings in City West, between the Zoo, Breitscheidplatz and Ku'damm. We oppose the planned 167-metre-high skyscraper in the Rudolfskiez neighbourhood of Friedrichshain.

Tackling office vacancy rates

Whilst approximately 2.2 million square metres of office space stands vacant in Berlin, new office buildings are nevertheless being

. We do not wish to grant any further planning permission for new office complexes, in order to prevent further land sealing and to preserve valuable land for other, urgently needed uses. Instead, we are committed to the conversion of existing, vacant office buildings, utilising available funding at federal level for this purpose and establishing a state funding programme. We are also calling for a federal law prohibiting the misuse of commercial premises, in order to consistently penalise vacancy. We will therefore not approve the development plans for the 'Urbane Mitte' at Gleisdreieck.

Refurbishment rather than new-build; avoiding vacancy and demolition

Multiple uses achieved through vertical integration – for example, flats above supermarkets or swimming pools on top of residential blocks – help to prevent further land consumption. We will implement a building policy that prioritises the addition of storeys to existing buildings, the conversion of office space and the refurbishment of vacant properties over space-intensive new-builds. We want to make demolitions subject to authorisation under the strictest criteria by amending the building regulations.

We want to ban the demolition of intact buildings. Together with civil society, we have halted the impending demolition of the Sports and Recreation Centre (SEZ) for the time being and are continuing to fight for the permanent preservation of this important piece of East German modernism. We call on the Senate, in collaboration with the borough, to carry out a feasibility study to develop alternatives for the full or partial preservation of the building, so that it can once again be used as social and sports infrastructure for the neighbourhood. Furthermore, a new school and housing units are to be built on the site. We also want to see the introduction of a vacancy register to systematically record vacant properties. We want to create modular housing and enable mixed-use development. State-owned housing companies should build flexible housing so that they can respond more quickly to changing housing needs.

Reviewing infill development

Together with the affected boroughs, we will scrutinise all as yet unimplemented redensification projects by state-owned housing associations involving the development of open spaces within existing neighbourhoods, and establish urban planning criteria for future redensification projects. The aim is to involve local residents more effectively and to ensure the projects meet urban planning standards. Where this has not yet been done, the procedure will be carried out retrospectively and the project suspended until then (moratorium). We call for the establishment of a publicly accessible register of vacant building plots to ensure transparency regarding unused land.

Fair competitions

To improve urban planning and architectural quality, more open, accessible and participatory competition procedures will be carried out. The requirement to organise competitions applies both to building clients within the public authorities of the State of Berlin and to state-owned enterprises. Fair tendering procedures will be ensured, in which smaller and regional providers can also become contractors.

Protecting small businesses

A vibrant urban life also includes the corner shops, bookshops, nurseries and children's shops, or clothes shops just round the corner. This is the only way Berlin can retain its local amenities, its unique charm and ensure that many thousands of Berliners keep their jobs. As Berlin already has an oversupply of shopping centres, which are leading to the displacement of small businesses, we propose that no new ones be authorised. We will revise the Urban Development Plan (StEP) for city centres – redefining the concept of a 'centre' as a provider of essential services rather than as a site of 'high commercial activity'. We will tackle the land-grabbing caused by yet more under-utilised hotels with a

accommodation development plan modelled on those of Barcelona and Heidelberg.

Land: public and free from speculation

Land is the key to sustainable and socially inclusive urban development. That is why land, as a public good, must be organised in the interests of the common good. In order to strategically further develop a city focused on the common good, Berlin needs control over its land. We want to maintain and increase the public land portfolio, place it under democratic control, and develop it cooperatively, including through a Land Advisory Board.

Through a Land Security Act, we aim to treat the land and buildings owned by the city and its enterprises collectively as the Berlin Land Fund and subject them to the same principles: 1. Transparency via a public land register; 2. Transparent allocation procedures subject to parliamentary oversight; participation of civil society in political decision-making, including through a Land Advisory Council; 3. a general ban on disposal.

We will realign the work of the state-owned property management and development body, Berliner Immobilienmanagement GmbH (BIM). It is to become more of a service provider for developments geared towards the public good and, in future, be more closely aligned with operational urban development and be organised accordingly. A new task force comprising BIM and the relevant Senate departments is to revise the procurement procedures in line with the needs of organisations working in the public interest and oversee them in future.

When making state-owned land available for public functions or purposes in the public interest, land values – which are often driven by speculation – should no longer play a role. Market-rate rents or ground rents should no longer be the determining factor; instead, the focus should be on public benefit or the revenue achievable through the publicly desired use. Thus, the ground rent for co-operatives and public-interest housing must be significantly reduced in order to

guarantee affordable rents. It should be based on the social benefits of multi-storey housing and guarantee affordable rents. Civil society is to be involved in land policy through the Berlin Land Advisory Board, which advises politicians and the administration on the terms for granting leasehold rights or for land acquisitions.

The pressure to maximise returns on the Berlin land market remains enormous. It often prevents the land from being used in the interests of Berliners. Where we cannot counter this through regulation or purchase, we want to at least contribute to the financing of public services through higher taxation.

-> For taxes, see Chapter '04 Budget and Finance' on page 73

Preserving Tempelhofer Feld as an open space

Tempelhofer Feld must remain open to the public in its entirety, and the law passed by referendum must be upheld. The field is of enormous importance for the city's social and environmental development. We therefore continue to oppose the development and privatisation of Tempelhofer Feld. Thanks to the referendum, the field has been protected from speculators and the threat of luxury development. Today, on warm days, the field is visited by around 100,000 people who have discovered the site as a free place for relaxation and leisure and have collectively made it their own. Tempelhofer Feld is therefore about more than just preserving a green space. In a growing and already highly densely populated city centre, it has become indispensable and fulfils the need for open space, particularly for people living in cramped neighbourhoods and housing conditions. We need Tempelhofer Feld in particular as a smog-reducing corridor of cool air and for the conservation of nature. Green spaces improve the urban climate and air quality, and help to absorb rainwater. Tempelhofer Feld also serves as a habitat for plants and animals.

We would like to work with the users to further develop the airport building so that it can become a social, ecological

and cultural neighbourhood of the future. We intend to allocate more funding for the refurbishment and further development of the building.

Safeguarding and improving open spaces for the benefit of society

Open spaces make an important social and ecological contribution in the city, yet are simultaneously misused as a means of increasing property values in order to charge higher rents for housing. In contrast, population groups disadvantaged in the housing market are often exposed to environmental pollution that is harmful to their health. Furthermore, the demands placed on open spaces have increased due to significantly greater usage and the climate crisis.

Alongside consistent tenant protection, we are therefore campaigning for local access to public green spaces and playgrounds, for spaces on public streets for everyone regardless of income, and for the reduction of environmental pollution that is harmful to health. We support civil society-led de-sealing initiatives to actively convert sealed surfaces into green spaces and infiltration areas.

Berlin needs a city-wide open-space strategy to ensure a more socially equitable distribution of good environmental quality, with specific guidelines, particularly for heat-reducing open spaces and those close to residential areas. In areas with above-average social deprivation and/or vulnerability, environmental quality – in particular the local climate situation resulting from urban development and the provision of public green spaces – should be improved. To this end, we are committed to the consistent implementation of the 'BaumEntscheid' (Tree Decision).

Enhancing public spaces

We want to reclaim public spaces for the common good and for neighbourhood purposes. Cultural institutions, schools and nurseries need climate-adapted open spaces; public authorities need open-plan offices and outdoor areas. Berlin should be less of a consumer-oriented space and accessible to all, even without money. We want to

enhance the 'outdoor city' and ensure a higher quality of life and usability throughout the city. We support the aim of the 'Berlin ad-free' referendum and are committed to reducing commercial advertising in public spaces. As a first step, a decision should be taken to ban large-scale commercial advertising on scaffolding and other construction site structures across the board. To ensure that outdoor dining does not come at the expense of pedestrian traffic whilst still having the necessary space, we want to allow the special use of parking lanes for outdoor dining areas.

Swimming in the Spree and public riverbanks for all

We support projects aimed at further improving the water quality of the River Spree and are seeking an amendment to the Bathing Waters Ordinance to make swimming in the River Spree and the River Havel generally permitted. The riverside path concept will be continued and revised. The aim is to make Berlin's riverbanks publicly accessible whilst ensuring they are in harmony with nature conservation. To this end, land purchases and, if necessary, compulsory purchase should be envisaged.

We are actively campaigning for the preservation and further development of the 'Fischerpinte' on Plötzensee, which is under threat of demolition. As an accessible, affordable and nature-oriented space, it fulfils an important social function, particularly for people from densely built-up neighbourhoods such as Wedding and Moabit, which lack sufficient public recreational areas.

Capital Region

Cooperation between Berlin, the city's outlying districts and the municipalities and districts of Brandenburg will be intensified at the planning level in order to manage settlement and transport developments and ensure the protection of natural areas.

03 Mobility and Transport Policy

Transport policy is social policy. Yet instead of promoting mobility as part of public services and restructuring it in a climate-friendly manner, the Black-Red Senate has led Berlin into a mobility crisis: buses and trains are becoming increasingly unreliable, new routes, cycle paths and footpaths are not being built, and roads and bridges are crumbling. The atmosphere on the roads has become noticeably harsher under the Black-Red coalition, and hostility amongst road users has increased.

Instead of tackling the crisis, the Senate has simply sat on the problems. We are committed to a new spirit of cooperation and greater fairness in mobility. The Left wants to return to progress: we will steer transport policy back in the right direction by strengthening the eco-friendly transport mix comprising local public transport, walking and cycling, and by giving it more space and priority. We will evaluate and further develop the Mobility Act. We will forge a broad alliance with the city's community and accelerate the implementation of the Mobility Act.

One thing is clear to us: mobility must not depend on where you live, whether you own a car, your state of health or your financial circumstances. Our priority is therefore to provide a comprehensive local public transport service, as well as to expand a comprehensive network of cycle paths and accessible pavements. In this way, we will ensure affordable mobility for everyone.

However, improving mobility should not be solely a matter of transport modes and routes, but should also be reflected in the city's infrastructure. The guiding principle of all planning should be journeys that are as short as possible and close to home. We will update the Urban Development Plan for Mobility and Transport (StEP MoVe), as well as the Local Transport Plan and the Public Transport Demand Plan, in line with actual needs. We are aligning these plans so that, by 2035, at least 90 per cent of all journeys within Berlin are made using eco-friendly transport.

Plan, engage and build!

We will expand planning capacity for new public transport links and bridges, as well as cycle paths and footpaths, within the central administration and the boroughs. In addition to reinforcing tramway planning, a key focus will be on staffing in the civil engineering sector to enable the strategic implementation of the Berlin Bridges Master Plan. We will review the administrative organisation structures with the aim of ensuring consistent and reliable planning and, where necessary, consolidate planning processes organisationally. In view of protracted planning processes, planning expertise must be urgently maintained and expanded.

Our aim is to make the best possible use of available federal and EU funding, ensure no funds are forfeited, and have sufficient plans for infrastructure projects 'in the pipeline'. We want to significantly accelerate the expansion of transport infrastructure in the new urban districts, particularly where many new affordable homes are being built.

Improve public transport for everyone!

A reliable public transport system forms the backbone of Berlin's mobility. Everyone, whether young or old, rich or poor, can use public transport. Services must also be expanded and infrastructure developed in the outlying districts. To ensure that everyone is happy to use it, the service must be consistent, fast, affordable and reliable. It is important that passenger information is significantly improved.

Mobility for all – affordable and funded

The Deutschlandticket has made it possible to use local transport nationwide with a single ticket – an enormous benefit. At federal level, we are campaigning for an increase in federal funding so that fares can be reduced again.

Public transport has now become too expensive for many Berliners. Mobility regardless of one's financial means is a fundamental prerequisite for

participation in social life. We will negotiate with the Berlin-Brandenburg Transport Association (VBB) to stabilise fares within the VBB from 1 January 2028, so that they do not become even more expensive. In future, a standard single ticket should be valid in any direction, including changes and interruptions to the journey.

We will reduce the price of the Sozialticket (Berlin S) back to 9 euros. We are suspending the discriminatory requirement to carry a transfer benefit notice. In addition, we will introduce a digital option for proving eligibility for the Berlin-Ticket S and reinstate the old procedure for applying for the Berlinpass via the citizens' offices. We will introduce a Germany Social Ticket for Berlin so that Berliners on low incomes can also afford a trip to Brandenburg or the Baltic Sea, or a visit to family. We are introducing a reduced-price Germany Ticket for school pupils and making it free for holders of the Berlinpass-BuT. Based on the Germany Ticket, we will offer a discount on the ticket for senior citizens.

We will negotiate the reintroduction of the BC ticket within the framework of the VBB.

We want to expand the use of the Germany Job Ticket in Berlin and abolish the minimum number of users per company, so that anyone can apply for it. We are committed to maintaining the solidarity-funded Germany Semester Ticket for student unions. Furthermore, we will create a statutory authorisation for student unions to provide micro-mobility services.

To provide further incentives to switch to local public transport and reduce car traffic, we are launching the programme 'Goodbye Car, Hello D-Ticket': anyone who gives up their car will receive the Deutschlandticket for one year in return.

We are campaigning to ensure that the BVG and S-Bahn no longer file criminal complaints when they encounter passengers without a valid ticket.

We will develop further funding mechanisms to finance public transport. In addition to revenue from parking charges, we will introduce a public transport levy for tourists.

In addition, we are examining the introduction of a beneficiary levy and a mobility pass for Berliners. The mobility pass will involve a recurring contribution from employers, residents or vehicle owners. Anyone who pays the levy will receive a mobility credit of the same amount for using eco-friendly transport, for example to purchase public transport tickets. During this legislative term, we will develop a model to replace the current fare system with a solidarity-based contribution scheme and, in the long term, we are committed to achieving a ticket-free public transport system.

Expanding the tram network, connecting the city

We will implement the extension of the tram network to the west of the city. To this end, we will strengthen tram planning to ensure sufficient capacity is available for the tram expansion. We will immediately lift the planning freeze on the routes set out in the local transport plan (Alexanderplatz–Kulturforum and Johannisthal–Gropiusstadt).

We will swiftly implement the Ostkreuz tram project, the ‘Mahlsdorf’ transport solution (including the prospective completion of the link between Mahlsdorf and Hellersdorf), and the routes currently at an advanced stage of planning (Turmstraße–Jungfernheide, Warschauer Straße–Hermannplatz, Heinersdorf–Blankenburg, Pankow–Heinersdorf–Weißensee and Potsdamer Platz–Hermannplatz–Schöneweide) will be implemented swiftly. The planning for the tram

We are pressing ahead in the direction of Spandau, rather than postponing improvements to public transport in Spandau by pursuing pipe dreams such as maglev trains.

In our further expansion plans, we are guided by the target network of the ‘Pro Straßenbahn’ alliance and always make provision for this in our infrastructure planning.

New tram routes are to be built with dedicated lanes and low-noise tracks, and existing routes are to undergo noise abatement works. On existing lines, we will increase service frequency, eliminate bottlenecks and create new direct connections. All traffic light systems must have priority signalling for trams. Trams must be able to bypass sections of track that are temporarily closed following accidents or breakdowns. To this end, we intend to upgrade the network, for example by installing additional points and track curves where appropriate. This would enable us to avoid the disruption to the M1 line—which is expected to last seven years—at minimal cost.

For the next generation of tram vehicles, we are, for the first time, considering the procurement of 60-metre trains in order to further increase tram passenger capacity and deploy them in areas of high demand. We will upgrade the Köpenick network so that modern trams from the 'Flexity' fleet can also operate there.

The Underground as the backbone of local transport

The underground forms the backbone of local public transport. Due to the massive backlog in maintenance, we must prioritise investment in the upkeep of infrastructure and technical modernisation, particularly the signalling and safety systems of the existing network. We will create the infrastructural conditions for more frequent services, make full use of the option to deploy 1,500 underground carriages, and increase service frequency. With the aim of achieving a 90-second interval during peak hours, we also intend to accelerate the introduction of automated train operations.

We consider the expansion of the underground network to be particularly useful for closing existing gaps in the network. We will maintain existing staffing levels and, once work on the Waisen Tunnel and the U3 extension has been completed, deploy staff to close these gaps.

Faster bus services

We will electrify the BVG's bus fleet as quickly as possible, by 2035 at the latest, in order to significantly reduce emissions in the transport sector. We need more bus lanes and priority traffic light systems as a matter of urgency. This will shorten journey times and free up capacity to stabilise bus services. BVG vehicles should be fitted with front-facing cameras, in compliance with data protection regulations, to monitor roadworks and penalise illegal parkers. The bus timetable commissioned by the State of Berlin must be reinstated and service cuts reversed. Once this has been achieved, we will expand bus services, particularly in those areas of the city that have not yet been adequately served and aim to offer a service at least every ten minutes throughout Berlin. We intend to expand the night bus service.

In areas with low demand, particularly in the outlying districts and on the city's outskirts, connections to the rapid transit network are to be established using minibus routes operating under the public transport fare system. During periods of low demand, these can also operate as on-demand buses or shared taxis without the need for digital booking systems. We advocate linking the bus routes operated by the BVG and other transport operators beyond the city limits, ensuring good connections between them and with a rapid transit station.

We will evaluate the trial of automated driving with the BVG and assess whether it should be continued.

Together with the BVG, we are introducing a register of bus stops and gradually replacing old bus shelters with new, climate-friendly ones.

Our guiding principle for the BVG is 'Stability and Growth'

The BVG has been in crisis mode for years. We will ensure that a robust timetable and action plan covering all areas of operation is drawn up, in order to provide Berliners with a binding plan setting out when the BVG will be able to run more frequent services again. Berlin is expected to exceed the four-million-inhabitant mark by 2040. As the population grows,

public transport must grow with it. When connecting new urban districts, public transport must be taken into account and planned for from the very outset.

We will support and expand the BVG's successful efforts to recruit and train driving staff. Our priority is to improve working conditions at the BVG so that staff can be retained in the long term. We will create new staff accommodation for BVG employees and trainees. We will draw up a roadmap for the orderly reintegration of the approximately 2,000 employees of Berlin Transport (BT) into the BVG.

In future, we will deploy our own emergency response staff at key BVG stations. To enhance the sense of safety on public transport, we will employ more station attendants, expand cleaning patrols on key underground lines and improve the sense of safety through structural measures and better lighting near stations and stops.

For an efficient, municipally-run S-Bahn!

To prevent another S-Bahn crisis, we must ensure the timely delivery of new rolling stock and the legally sound conclusion of the tendering process for the Stadtbahn and North-South sub-networks. This is essential for lengthening trains, increasing service frequency and serving new routes. The capacity of the Ostkreuz–Westkreuz S-Bahn line must be increased to allow for more frequent services. To ensure the stable operation of the Ringbahn and the future Siemensbahn, additional platform tracks as well as stabling and turning tracks must be built at Westhafen, Westend and Halensee.

On the S-Bahn lines to Oranienburg, Bernau, Strausberg, Spindlersfeld, Königs Wusterhausen and Hennigsdorf, we aim to enable a ten-minute service interval and, to this end, extend them to double track for the most part. We support the extension of the S-Bahn line from Wartenberg via Karower Kreuz to Schönerlinder Straße, as well as the new lines from the main station via Gleisdreieck to Anhalter Bahnhof and the Siemensbahn from Jungfernheide to Gar-

tenfeld and on to Hakenfelde. We are campaigning for additional stations on existing lines to improve access to key areas, such as Kamenzer Damm. We support the resumption of the Stammbahn service from Zehlendorf to Potsdam. Furthermore, the S-Bahn connection from Wannsee via Zehlendorf must be guaranteed at ten-minute intervals.

We continue to strive for the municipalisation of the Berlin S-Bahn so that necessary investments can be made, profits remain in Berlin, and services can be awarded directly rather than having to go through lengthy tendering procedures. Municipalisation should take place either through the federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg acquiring a stake in S-Bahn Berlin GmbH or through the establishment of a state-owned company to operate the Berlin S-Bahn. We will finally initiate the necessary negotiations with Deutsche Bahn and the federal government.

Encouraging commuters to switch: expanding rail links to the surrounding areas

By expanding regional rail and S-Bahn services to the surrounding areas, we will create attractive options for commuters to switch from their own cars to public transport. On the busiest routes to Brandenburg (Havel) and Frankfurt (Oder), services are to be increased to a 15-minute frequency

. To accommodate this additional service, capacity must be increased on the light rail system, the north-south link and in the Spandau area. Services to Rostock and Stralsund must be maintained. We support the target network proposed by the Berlin-Brandenburg Rail Alliance.

In time for the tenth anniversary in 2027, we intend to review and reprioritise the i2030 programme together with our partners. The aim is to secure funding throughout the programme in order to drive planning forward without interruption and achieve tangible results in its implementation. The same applies to the planning and the double-track, electrified expansion of the Ostbahn and the East Local Transport Bypass. Following the example of the Siemensbahn, we intend to establish further project alliances to complete the

these routes. Together with Brandenburg, we are campaigning for the federal government to begin planning the reconstruction of the Nordbahn (Gesundbrunnen–Birkenwerder). To further integrate transport modes, we will initiate the planning of regional train platforms at key interchange points, such as Buckower Chaussee.

Improving services for commuters

Together with Brandenburg, we will drive forward the cross-state expansion of cycle express routes as part of our joint regional planning. We will also discuss with our neighbouring federal state the expansion of park-and-ride facilities, cycle parking facilities and cycle paths within Brandenburg, with the aim of advancing joint, multi-modal mobility planning as part of an eco-friendly transport network.

Greater safety, less noise, better air quality

The number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents in Berlin has not fallen for years. We are basing our road safety programme on Vision Zero (zero fatalities or serious injuries in road traffic accidents). To this end, we are taking other European cities, such as Helsinki, as examples and examining which measures we can adopt. Two measures that are undisputedly effective are reducing car traffic and limiting speeds to 30 km/h. We are campaigning at national level for 30 km/h to be the standard speed limit in built-up areas and, independently of this, are making use of every opportunity to implement 30 km/h on Berlin's roads as well. We will also be working systematically in advance to ensure compliance with the stricter EU limits from 2030 onwards in the transport sector. Berlin will step up enforcement of traffic regulations to prevent accidents and protect lives and health. Separate traffic light cycles with dedicated green phases for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as for motorised traffic, will improve road safety. We are separating cycle and car traffic and systematically making junctions and crossings safer.

We will also increase the number of mobile speed cameras and boost staffing levels at the fines office. To crack down more consistently on mobile phone use whilst driving, we will introduce mobile phone speed cameras. To address the climate crisis, we are increasing parking charges for SUVs, following the Paris model, and are campaigning at federal level to ensure that no new SUVs are registered.

We want people on low incomes who live on streets that are currently busy and noisy to enjoy more peace and quiet. To achieve this, car traffic on these streets must be made quieter and reduced, and public spaces must be redesigned with people in mind.

We will reorganise winter maintenance services with the aim of improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists. We want to transfer the responsibility for clearing snow and gritting pavements from building owners to the BSR; the BSR may, in certain areas, commission external service providers to clear the pavements. We reject any further relaxation of the ban on road salt.

Safety on the way to school and mobility management

We will step up measures to improve road safety for children and young people, for example through traffic calming, school streets, mobility management at schools, family-friendly opening hours at youth traffic schools, and mobility education from nursery age through to adulthood.

Inclusive mobility for all

Everyone must be able to reach their destinations easily, comfortably, safely and independently. Roads and public transport must be accessible to all. We will consolidate and further develop the 'Alternative Accessible Transport' scheme.

We are working with the district authorities to make bus stops accessible, prioritising those identified as particularly important in cooperation with disability organisations, especially

interchange points. As a general rule, all bus stops in the city should have covered, green waiting areas with seating. We are continuing to make underground, S-Bahn and regional railway stations accessible and are providing the necessary funding. Lifts and escalators must operate more reliably, and spare parts must be reliably stocked. To ease the burden, we are installing cycle ramps on the stairs. The provision of public toilets at stations and interchange points is to be improved.

We will significantly improve the spontaneous availability of accessible taxis and continue to support their procurement. We will finally complete the development of the comprehensive strategy for ensuring mobility for people with reduced mobility. The VBB escort service must be maintained in the long term; we will enshrine it in the Mobility Act.

Cycling – everyone should be able to cycle safely and comfortably.

Cycling is cost-effective and can be enjoyed by people of all ages, making an important contribution to social participation and mobility in Berlin. Its share of journeys made in Berlin has been rising steadily for years. We will continue to expand safe cycle paths. The aim is to create a safe and seamless network of cycle paths and cycle lanes, as well as fast cycle routes, in line with the existing cycle network plan, whilst prioritising the closure of existing gaps and the expansion of key corridors. In doing so, we will consistently apply the design standards set out in the Cycling Plan, such as protected cycle lanes, and tailor the infrastructure to particularly vulnerable groups such as children, families and older people.

To promote intermodality (the use of different modes of transport for a single journey), we will improve cycle parking facilities, particularly at railway stations, through the provision of multi-storey cycle car parks and sufficient ‘bike-and-ride’ parking spaces. We will examine the possibility of supporting the expansion and refurbishment of footpaths and cycle paths by building up public construction capacity.

We will resume funding for a public, station-based bike-share scheme offering 30 minutes' free use in combination with a public transport ticket. We will promote and expand schemes for the local hire of cargo bikes.

Walking safely

Walking is Berlin's leading form of transport: it is the fastest-growing, most city-friendly, gentlest on the environment, and most space- and infrastructure-efficient. Pedestrians must be able to move around in public spaces safely and without barriers. Pedestrians should be protected from motor vehicle and cycle traffic.

To maintain pavements, we are establishing a condition register, supporting the boroughs in repairing damage and ensuring that pavements remain clear during construction work, tree planting and special-use events.

We will finally adopt the pedestrian mobility plan currently being drawn up and implement it as a matter of high priority. Based on this plan, we will identify, define and implement local priorities for action and targets.

We will create more space and a better quality of life for pedestrians by reducing driving and parking areas for motor vehicles, particularly in large, lively shopping streets, pedestrianised areas and neighbourhood blocks. Together with the boroughs, we will expand the provision of crossing facilities such as pedestrian crossings (zebra crossings) and central islands, as well as extended pavements and areas secured by bollards. At traffic lights, we want to make it possible to cross the entire road in a single go, thereby taking particular account of the needs of people with walking difficulties.

We are improving the quality of the public environment by providing seating through a programme to install 1,200 benches across Berlin's twelve boroughs.

Shaping the mobility transition together at a local level

We want to significantly reduce car traffic in Berlin. We need more traffic-calmed streets and neighbourhoods where people can move about safely and enjoyably. The most suitable model for traffic calming and reducing car traffic on a particular street or in a neighbourhood should be decided locally within the boroughs and supported by participatory processes. In doing so, the concerns of those affected must be taken into account through a transparent, accessible process.

We will continue to support 'Kiezblock' initiatives with greater involvement from residents, retailers and businesses, and actively involve them in the process. To implement this, the 'Kiezblock' guidelines will be updated and made available to the boroughs. Within the neighbourhood blocks, we will reduce through traffic by implementing appropriate measures, such as traffic barriers or one-way streets. In doing so, we will ensure that residents can still access the streets when necessary, as can, amongst others, emergency vehicles, refuse collection and delivery vehicles.

Berlin needs a functioning taxi industry

We will put an end to the preferential treatment of ride-hailing platforms such as Uber and strengthen Berlin's taxi industry, which plays a vital role in local public transport. Inspections of private hire companies must be significantly stepped up to ensure compliance with legal requirements. Following Hamburg's example, we will require hire car companies to install taximeters so that inspections can be carried out effectively, and we will introduce minimum fares for hire cars. We are committed to maintaining well-equipped taxi ranks and ensuring attractive conditions for the taxi industry at the main railway station. In future, there will be a central point of contact for taxi ranks within the Senate.

We will enter into negotiations with the Dahme-Spreewald district to secure the right for all Berlin taxis to pick up passengers at BER Airport

. In consultation with the taxi associations and the BVG, we are developing a concept for a women's* night taxi service to complement public transport.

The future of road transport

The future of motorised transport lies in reducing its use. In addition to climate and heat protection, road safety and quality of life, there are often sound economic reasons for this. Of course, motor vehicles fulfil important, socially necessary functions: supply and waste management, the transport of security and emergency services personnel, deliveries, patient transport and, last but not least, passenger transport by buses and taxis, as well as many others. We want to strengthen these functions and create the space necessary for them to operate reliably, thereby ensuring greater fairness in the allocation of road space.

Today, however, this function is restricted by the density of parked vehicles. Incorrectly parked vehicles regularly become traffic obstructions and safety hazards. We will therefore implement rigorous parking enforcement. Parking enforcement is to be carried out using 'scan cars' as soon as possible. This will relieve the burden on staff at the public order offices and enable them to be deployed in other areas. All boroughs are to receive financial support to expand their parking management schemes. Legislation will ensure that the scan data collected in the process is not used for any other purposes.

The draft bill for the 'Verkehrsratsentscheid' referendum has sparked an important debate on mobility in Berlin. We will enshrine the new road category of 'public-interest roads' – i.e. the possibility of partially closing off roads – in the Roads Act and implement it in consultation with the boroughs and local residents. Berlin will follow the Paris model and reallocate large sections of roads for pedestrian and cycle traffic in order to significantly reduce car traffic.

Furthermore, the future of motorised transport lies in electric vehicles. We will therefore establish and expand an efficient public charging infrastructure – accessible even to tenants without their own parking space – under the management of the state-owned municipal utility.

We oppose the construction of new motorways in Berlin. Noise protection measures must be made possible on existing motorways.

We demand that the A100 be brought to a proper end at Treptower Park and not extended any further. We are campaigning for the construction of a noise barrier on the eastern side of the 16th construction section and are examining whether it can be converted into a city road with a cycle highway.

We will remove the planned 17th construction section of the A100 from the land-use plan and lobby the federal government to have it removed from the Trunk Road Development Act. The legal provision under the Federal Trunk Roads Authority Establishment Act should be utilised, and the planning approval authority should be transferred back from the federal government to the State of Berlin.

We will focus on the coordinated maintenance of the road infrastructure and implement the Bridges Master Plan . To this end, we will examine further measures to speed up the refurbishment and replacement of bridges. With regard to the remaining plans for new road construction, we will give priority to eco-friendly transport in the event of conflicting objectives and take into account the other public-interest needs of urban society.

Coordinating construction sites

We aim to reduce the disruption caused by construction sites through digitalisation – for example, via a central platform – and enhanced coordination. We will speed up the approval process for construction sites on public roads, particularly for necessary measures relating to essential public infrastructure, by digitalising processes and equipping the relevant approval authorities. We are establishing a Construction Site Coordination Unit within the Senate. The unit will develop a

strategy for coordinating construction and transport. Planned construction works on public roads will in future be fully coordinated with the BVG.

Sharing schemes and micromobility

Sharing schemes and micromobility are intended to increase mobility and contribute to the transport transition. This also includes designating provider-neutral parking spaces for rental vehicles across the city. We will gradually and appropriately increase the special usage fees we have introduced for electrified micro-mobility rental vehicles, thereby ensuring that providers contribute to the costs incurred. Once the special usage rights have expired, we will make the granting of licences to sharing providers conditional upon them providing a sufficient and high-quality service across the entire city. Above all, to protect water bodies and green spaces, as well as people with reduced mobility, providers must be obliged to allow vehicles to be parked exclusively in the areas designated for this purpose and to remove vehicles parked elsewhere as quickly as possible.

Providers must be available to deal with complaints on a regular basis and resolve any issues reported within a reasonable timeframe. We support the expansion of further Jelbi stations and the integration of sharing schemes into public transport. Through targeted support measures, we will also bring car-sharing schemes to the outlying districts.

Making commercial and freight transport socially and environmentally sustainable

Commercial and freight transport in Berlin requires innovative delivery and distribution concepts that make greater use of railways and waterways. Public transport infrastructure should also be utilised for delivery traffic in order to ensure greater urban sustainability. We will carry out a feasibility and potential analysis for freight trams to take commercial traffic off the roads, day and night, without restricting public transport.

For local freight transport, parcel deliveries and retail deliveries, we will promote the use of electric vans, electric cars and cargo bikes, for example by providing convenient parking facilities. To reduce delivery traffic, we want provider-neutral micro-depots and parcel lockers. We want to establish delivery and commercial parking zones on every street to provide tradespeople, delivery services and care providers with a legally compliant option for parking. At the same time, we will take stronger action against dangerous, illegal parking.

We will assess and develop company sidings, local freight transshipment points, as well as disused railway facilities and freight stations, with a view to reactivating them. Throughout Berlin, the few remaining railway sites that are currently unused must be preserved for such purposes. The shift of freight transport to rail must also be possible close to city centres in order to reduce the number of lorry-kilometres. The operation of inner-city logistics centres will be taken over by a state-owned company.

Climate protection in aviation

The aviation sector must become climate-neutral. To this end, we support the creation of the necessary conditions. We advocate a ban on short-haul flights where the journey can be completed by rail within six hours. We are campaigning for a massive expansion of the rail network and a reduction in fares. We are campaigning for the night-time flight ban to be extended to between 10 pm and 6 am. Further noise reduction measures at BER must follow. Noise abatement measures must continue to be implemented. We reject any full or partial privatisation of FBB.

We are calling on the federal government to ban private and business flights, with the exception of urgent and unavoidable flights to and from BER.

Mobility by water and air

We will retain the cable car at the 'Gardens of the World', ensure its operation by the State of Berlin, and integrate it into the local public transport network.

We are committed to ensuring that boat transport within Berlin is powered by electricity as far as possible. We will plan the necessary infrastructure for private boat transport and urge the federal authorities to tighten emissions regulations for private and commercial vessels.

We are committed to improving safety and environmental protection on Berlin's waterways. We will significantly step up inspections by the water police.

04 Budget and Finance

A social perspective for the state budget

The Black-Red coalition has – yet again – left a financial shambles in its wake. Unnecessary cuts were made to social, cultural and youth services, whilst the reserves left by the previous government were squandered on pointless projects and potential sources of revenue were left untapped. The constant back-and-forth over budgetary policy has unsettled the city and failed to offer any ideas for solving the structural problems of the state budget. In this way, the coalition is undermining the city's ability to act effectively on budgetary matters. It is high time for a change of course!

The Black-Red coalition is threatening Berlin's social infrastructure with a new cliff edge once the next budgetary period ends. We need a thorough review of the city's finances immediately after the election.

New, socially-minded majorities in Berlin must establish a strategy as soon as possible to safeguard and develop the city's social infrastructure in the short and medium term, and agree this with the city's residents. Political alternatives require a financial foundation that will last for at least one parliamentary term.

Berlin's budgetary situation is also a reflection of an unfair tax system. We on the Left stand for a fair tax system that places a greater burden on high incomes and wealth and reliably funds public services. The debt brake also remains an obstacle to public investment. A wealth tax, in particular, could generate additional revenue running into the billions for the state budget. However, this framework cannot be broken at state level alone. We will fight for these decisions at federal level. And it is important that the State of Berlin also advocates for such a change.

But even at the Berlin level, given the current difficult financial situation, we want to face up to our responsibility to develop a strategy

that safeguards social infrastructure and finances investments for the future. The erratic and irresponsible policies of the Black-Red coalition have made a left-wing approach to achieving a balanced state budget in the medium term more difficult – but not impossible. We want to set out on a path to bring revenue and expenditure back into balance in the medium term, without having to reduce overall expenditure.

Such an approach must limit the rise in expenditure and can rely on stable revenue growth.

Economic development provides the basis for revenue growth

Despite the crises of recent years, Berlin can point to economic growth that is consistently above the national average. Not only has Berlin weathered the COVID-19 crisis considerably better than all other federal states, but it has also experienced the strongest economic growth since 2020, thereby building on the positive trend seen in the years prior to the COVID-19 crisis. The sectors that have contributed most to this positive trend are hospitality, information and communication, which have grown by almost 30 per cent since 2020. No other federal state has seen such a trend. Nor has per capita productivity increased as much in any other federal state as it has in Berlin.

In recent years, Berlin has benefited from the fact that global market trends have not had the same impact here as they have in Germany's industrial regions.

This means the situation differs fundamentally from the budgetary crisis of the 2000s. At that time, the city was grappling with years of economic stagnation.

Today, stable economic growth can be used to project revenue trends for the state budget that provide a sound basis for a fiscal strategy.

Securing the ‘social city’: expanding revenue opportunities, limiting expenditure growth, and making investments for the future

Our budgetary strategy is geared towards safeguarding social infrastructure and enabling investment in the future. Based on the forecast of a steady rise in revenue, achieved through the active development of additional revenue streams and by limiting the rise in expenditure, the structural budget deficit can be eliminated in the medium term. This enables a stable, sustainable level of funding for the core areas of the budget. This consolidation strategy safeguards the social city in the long term, builds resilience against crises, enables urgently needed investments in the future, and is thus the exact opposite of the austerity measures and cutbacks pursued by the Black-Red coalition!

We want to tap into potential efficiency gains – for example, through administrative reform and digitalisation, but also by reducing bureaucracy in the allocation of grants – and keep the costs of social infrastructure and transfer payments predictable. To this end, we intend to utilise borrowing margins, legally redefine the cyclical component and extend repayment periods, following the example of other federal states.

We want to utilise all borrowing options and exhaust all reserves to finance this adjustment programme. The legal scope for borrowing, for example through the calculation of the cyclical adjustment, must be expanded wherever possible, and repayment periods extended. We intend to consistently tap into potential sources of revenue. Taken together, all of this can – to a limited extent – also create scope for setting political priorities.

We know that this also requires setting priorities. Not every good idea and not every sensible improvement will be feasible right now if we are not to jeopardise the goal of securing our social infrastructure in the medium term. In doing so, we do not wish to shy away from debates on political alternatives. But we know that the implementation of such alternatives always requires a financial basis.

Honesty, reliability

We are committed to honesty regarding the limited scope for manoeuvre. This is the prerequisite for reliability in terms of how the social infrastructure is to weather the crisis. Instead of the politics of uncertainty and ad hoc decision-making we have experienced, we want to involve the stakeholders in the social infrastructure and grant them medium-term planning certainty.

A clear social focus rather than prestige projects and pipe dreams

At the same time, even in the midst of a budgetary crisis, our focus remains on social cohesion. The aim is to safeguard the social infrastructure and the capacity to provide essential public services, whilst enabling investment in the future. It is about a social and diverse Berlin. We reject pipe dreams, large-scale projects and prestige projects. We do not believe in the fairy tale that large-scale projects, such as an Olympic bid, will solve Berlin's problems. We do not want to pour our scarce resources into expensive projects in the vague hope that external funding will eventually materialise. It is about hard work for Berlin, not basking in the limelight.

Investment drive despite the debt brake

Whether it's bridges, nurseries, hospitals, social services or schools – Berlin urgently needs investment! The debt brake is still proving to be a brake on investment.

The federal government has announced its intention to reform the debt brake; we are happy to offer our advice and support, and together with allies in other federal states and local authorities, we will continue to fight for its complete abolition.

That is why state-owned enterprises are becoming increasingly important here. We want to expand this through transaction loans that we make available to state-owned enterprises and other models. To ensure that investment is targeted and effective, we need a

coordinated investment strategy for investments from the state budget, via the federal government's special fund and the state-owned enterprises.

Berlin has a significant need for investment in infrastructure and the climate-friendly transformation of the city.

Increased investment in climate protection, mobility and social infrastructure is essential in the face of the climate crisis and poverty. At the same time, it offers the opportunity to improve public services and creates regional value and jobs.

A key focus here is on state-owned enterprises. The public electricity and district heating networks, our water utilities, housing associations, Berlin's swimming pools, the BVG and many other state-owned enterprises must be prepared for the challenges ahead. However, social institutions and organisations also require support for transformation investments.

We always keep the impact on the people of Berlin in mind. Public funding for refurbishment projects is intended to ensure that the costs are not borne solely by customers.

Our focus is on ensuring that residents and customers pay socially acceptable prices at state-owned companies.

Smart investments

Funds from the federal government's special fund must therefore not be allowed to go to waste. The haphazard allocation of these funds to short-term, one-off measures must be rectified. We are carrying out a targeted selection of measures to ensure the efficient use of funds for social and environmental infrastructure. This naturally includes setting priorities for the city as a whole. We are allocating a larger share of the federal government's special fund to the boroughs. We are planning with foresight and preventing

funds from going to waste by initiating regular monitoring that identifies necessary long-term investments and factors them into investment planning. Measures in the areas of climate protection, mobility and energy efficiency can reduce costs in the medium term. To this end, we will utilise all available EU and federal programmes and ensure their co-financing – no funding must be lost!

Particularly in view of the immense rise in construction costs, we must ensure the effectiveness of investments if the increase in investment funds is not to be directly eroded by cost increases. Such counter-strategies only work – or at least work better – if the investments made by state-owned enterprises and state administrations are considered collectively. There is currently no sensible, medium-term investment strategy that coordinates the various stakeholders and ensures the effectiveness of these investments.

We therefore propose the establishment of a state-owned agency for strategic investment. With regard to state-owned enterprises, this agency should support the state, as the owner, in implementing and monitoring the coordination of investment strategies in the state's best interests.

Public enterprises as partners in transformation

Berlin's state-owned enterprises undertake major tasks relating to public services and the provision of public infrastructure. We want to strengthen and further develop them as part of the public economy, and protect them from being sold off by introducing a 'privatisation brake'.

Strong shoulders must bear a greater burden so that Berlin is a home for everyone.

Berlin must finally tap into its revenue potential. Wealth must contribute more to financing the common good. Taxation options at state level are limited; whilst these

used consistently, however, there is additional revenue potential running into the hundreds of millions of euros.

We call for an increase in the land transfer tax from the current 6.0 per cent to 8.0 per cent, or at least to the Brandenburg level of 6.5 per cent.

We will lobby the federal government to ensure that the federal states are granted the legal scope to differentiate the tax rate, so that, for example, property acquisitions for social housing or for owner-occupied homes outside the luxury segment can be exempted from such an additional tax burden.

However, this also involves pressing for a reform of the land transfer tax at federal level, so that loopholes – such as those created by share deals – are no longer possible.

Trade tax in Berlin has not been adjusted since 1999. We will examine an increase to the Potsdam assessment rate of 470 basis points. In doing so, particular care must be taken to ensure that the burden on small and medium-sized enterprises, which are suffering from rising commercial rents, remains reasonable.

We are placing particular emphasis on the taxation of villas and luxury properties: we want to find ways to ensure that buyers and owners of villas and luxury lofts with a sale value of 4 million euros or more contribute more significantly to tackling the budgetary crisis. To counter property speculation and promote housing construction, the introduction of a 'Property Tax C' is being examined. We are also looking at further ways to increase revenue: for example, by raising the tax on second homes or parking charges.

The tax offices bear a particular responsibility for enforcing existing tax law. They should therefore be provided with the best possible staffing and technical resources to prevent tax evasion and tax avoidance by large companies and high-net-worth individuals. We want to launch a recruitment drive with the aim of training 100

additional new trainee tax inspectors into training each year, in addition to existing staffing plans. To this end, we want to make the training programme more attractive through special allowances for trainees and examine whether new potential can be tapped through a new organisational structure and a new qualification concept, offering opportunities for lateral entry and targeted further training for middle-ranking civil servants (standard promotion or career progression through practical experience). In addition, we aim to make the training programme more attractive by providing trainee accommodation with affordable housing, made available by the state-owned housing companies. We intend to use the forthcoming renegotiation of the cooperation agreement with the State of Brandenburg on training capacities, due to take place in the coming legislative period, to significantly increase training capacities and boost the appeal of apprenticeships; a Berlin branch of the Brandenburg State University of Applied Sciences for Finance could also contribute to this.

At federal level, we will launch initiatives to reintroduce the wealth tax and to reform the joint taxes. Should the federal government continue to block the wealth tax, we will examine the legal feasibility of its introduction by the federal states and press ahead with this.

Every year, the State of Berlin suffers . This money is sorely missed elsewhere, and it also creates a competitive disadvantage for businesses operating in good faith. The investigative and law enforcement must be optimally equipped to effectively combat this form of crime within the circles of the wealthy. We on the Left are committed to ensuring that Berlin takes the lead in this area. To this end, a centre of excellence is to be established, staffed by personnel with specialist expertise and operational experience; in addition to at least 20 public prosecutors working within a specialised prosecution unit, the staff should comprise at least 60 further seconded investigators from the three pillars of the police, customs and tax investigation services. All those involved should work under one roof and with a standardised IT infrastructure. To enable the sustainable development of specialist expertise

, we intend to review and reform internal staff development strategies so that a specialist career path becomes possible. To evaluate the success of the centre of excellence, the statistics are to be reviewed and revised in order to measure not only formally established claims but also actual additional tax revenue. To support the generation of knowledge relating to this type of organised crime, three chairs in financial and economic crime are to be established at Berlin's universities. To strengthen cooperation between the federal states, a regular conference (e.g. annually) is also to be held in Berlin, offering the relevant agencies from across the country the opportunity to exchange expert and practical knowledge.

Pact with social service providers

Social infrastructure is under massive pressure due to the austerity policies of Berlin's Black-Red Senate. Despite the strained budgetary situation, we on the Left are committed to long-term and reliable funding for social infrastructure. We therefore wish to conclude a pact with social service providers and welfare organisations that safeguards the level of funding for social infrastructure. The 'Pact with Social Service Providers' sets out a binding collaboration between the Berlin Senate and social service providers to safeguard the city's social infrastructure in the long term. The aim is to ensure the long-term viability of social services through reliable, long-term funding, secure collective agreement standards for staff and the removal of bureaucratic hurdles. To ensure that pay rises also reach employees of social service providers, we will establish a central wage fund to meet these needs.

Non-profit services, together with municipal services, form the backbone of the social infrastructure. We want to halt the growth of private, profit-driven providers in the sector of social services of general interest. In the medium to long term, our aim is to curb the private profit-driven approach in favour of non-profit and local authority services. This includes the remunicipalisation of social

public services where appropriate, as well as their organisation as public-law institutions with co-determination by employees and service users. Planning certainty and stable standards for social service providers, as well as stabilising municipal services, are prerequisites for this.

Reform of the law on grants

We will reform the law on grants in the near future to ease the administrative burden and significantly reduce administrative costs for providers. These funds are better utilised in social work. We will provide long-term support for recurring needs in order to further reduce the administrative burden. We are developing digital budgeting tools that everyone can access. Transparency and communication are our top priorities in all projects relating to grants: we will involve everyone who is committed to a socially and environmentally sustainable city!

Combating land speculation – preventing privatisation

The pressure to maximise returns on the Berlin land market remains enormous. Yet land is the key to sustainable and socially inclusive urban development. We will therefore reorganise it as a public good in the interests of the common good. It is our stated aim to secure and expand the public land portfolio and place it under democratic control.

We want to prevent the privatisation of public land. We have learnt from the mistakes of the past. Through a Land Security Act, we will register the land and buildings owned by the city and its enterprises in a public land register, impose a general ban on their sale, and involve civil society in political decision-making, including through a Land Advisory Board. We are seeking to enshrine a ban on privatisation in the Berlin Constitution. In the Bundesrat, we are campaigning for a strengthening of the local authority's right of first refusal. In addition to the continued purchase of land, this should be accompanied by the adoption of a transparent strategy. For social infrastructure

, market-rate rents or ground rent should no longer be the determining factor. Instead, public benefit should be factored into the calculation, or the income achievable from the publicly intended use. In this way, ground rent for co-operatives and housing built for the common good will be reduced to guarantee affordable rents.

05 Economy

We want an economy that serves the people, ensures widespread prosperity and a good quality of life, and does not destroy the environment. Even though we do not regard the current economic system as the end of the story, we will ensure stable economic development in Berlin. For us, secure jobs with the aim of full employment, the socio-ecological transformation of production and the democratisation of economic life go hand in hand. A metropolis like Berlin needs a strong industrial sector, a thriving skilled trades sector, innovative products and close cooperation between businesses and trade unions, politicians and universities.

Economic situation and outlook

Berlin's economy has grown over the past ten years. Berlin is booming – but only for a few. Whilst many wealthy individuals and investors are profiting, the social divide in our city is deepening. We are not experiencing economic growth that broadly ensures income and prosperity. This situation is exacerbated by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, uncertainties regarding supply chains and energy prices, US tariff policy and the challenges posed by the necessary transformation.

We want economic development that also benefits the people of the city – through secure jobs with good working conditions and decent pay. We see digitalisation, transformation and decarbonisation as opportunities for Berlin's economy. With its innovative strength, its unique higher education landscape and vibrant digital economy, our city has excellent prospects for a bright economic and social future. The circular economy and the solidarity-based economy are concepts through which we can once again place the well-being of people and the environment more firmly at the heart of economic activity. Berlin has great opportunities in the future-oriented sectors of information and communication technology, the digital and creative industries, the healthcare sector, and the energy and transport industries. We

want to organise a socially and environmentally just transition: jobs must be safeguarded and workers must be equipped with the skills needed for this change. These changes must not come at the expense of workers and their jobs, and deindustrialisation must be prevented. To ensure that economic development also benefits workers, we want to reverse the decline in collective bargaining coverage. Only 45 per cent of workers in Berlin are now employed in companies covered by collective agreements.

This is lower than the national average. To halt this negative trend, we intend to support the demands of the DGB, engage in dialogue with employers' organisations and, via the Bundesrat, to abolish so-called 'OT associations' (these are employers' organisations explicitly designed to protect companies without collective agreements). Furthermore, we want to oblige craft guilds to conduct collective bargaining.

We do not want economic development like that seen in London, where FinTech bankers and start-up entrepreneurs make billions and buy up the city, whilst ordinary working people can no longer find decent work and, as couriers, are only allowed to deliver pizzas and groceries. We will retain and expand value creation within the city. Particularly in the new and digital sectors, alongside well-paid jobs for tech workers, new forms of work are emerging which, unfortunately, are all too often precarious and poorly protected. We must prevent a digital divide in the world of work. We must therefore ensure that innovative ideas and products are also implemented and produced here in our region. To achieve this, our businesses and companies must be able to adapt to change, make sensible use of the opportunities offered by digitalisation and, last but not least, train their staff.

For this transformation to succeed, massive investment is needed – in infrastructure, in businesses and in people. To ensure that the public sector can also invest sufficiently, the debt brake must be radically reformed so that the federal states and local authorities have greater scope for investment. We consider it wrong that the federal government has suspended the debt brake solely for rearmament, and the 500-billion- is by no means sufficient. However, the special

fund does, however, offer us, as a federal state, a number of opportunities. We want to ensure that the 5 billion euros earmarked for Berlin is used specifically to promote socio-ecological innovation and transformation in Berlin-based businesses and is directed exclusively towards purely civilian objectives.

Targeted economic development

We will realign Berlin's economic policy with strategic objectives and with the interests of the people in mind, and consistently gear our funding policy towards these goals. The Senate's funding policy to date has not been equal to the scale and scope of the challenges.

We intend to further develop the joint innovation strategy with Brandenburg in such a way that it genuinely brings together the specific strengths, potential and needs of both states and jointly focuses them on the future.

In view of the difficult budgetary situation, we will make funding strictly conditional: we have, for the first time, included a collective bargaining compliance clause in the 'Neustart' programme and will further strengthen the conditions relating to adherence to collective agreements, environmental sustainability, and the creation and safeguarding of jobs.

We want to encourage new economic activities rather than allow windfall gains. We will publish a report setting out transparently which company sizes and economic sectors have ultimately benefited from the funding, and have become more productive, sustainable, equitable or democratic. We will ensure that smaller businesses also benefit more from economic support, are provided with targeted information about funding opportunities and can access them more easily, so that it is not primarily large companies with specialist application advisers who stand to gain. We will reinstate the coaching bonus for start-up founders, which was scrapped by the coalition, and promote access to loans for start-ups: whether for deep-tech start-ups, the founder of a greengrocer's or the founder of a bicycle repair shop.

The creative industries play a role in Berlin that is not only central to the city's identity but is also of vital importance to its overall economic development. It was right that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of Berlin, under left-wing leadership, acted independently and courageously to ensure the sector's survival. However, the CDU's Senators for Culture and the policies of Mayor Kai Wegner are taking a sledgehammer to our creative scene.

We will also resume targeted support for the migrant economy. It offers great potential for the diversified development of Berlin's economy. The same applies to support for women in the skilled trades, for start-up founders and for women in leadership positions.

Both in its economic development programmes and in its procurement practices, the State of Berlin will place greater emphasis on aspects of global justice. This includes promoting targeted development cooperation on an equal footing, rather than hierarchical development cooperation. Human rights and environmental standards must be enshrined in production and supply chains, as well as in procurement guidelines.

Public procurement

We want to reduce bureaucracy in public procurement and further digitise the process so that businesses can apply more easily. This will also give smaller businesses better opportunities. Public procurement should be used more extensively as a tool for local economic development.

To ensure that businesses do not have to fill in extensive forms for every new contract, we want to introduce positive lists and certifications. These lists will include businesses that are bound by collective agreements and meet various other award criteria. When applying for a public contract, these businesses will then no longer need to provide details regarding their compliance with the criteria. In collaboration with the chambers of commerce, we want to create a support scheme that helps smaller Berlin-based companies obtain the necessary certificates, thereby making it much easier for them to

to public tenders. In addition to the existing socio-ecological procurement criteria, particular consideration should be given to companies operating within the Economy for the Common Good. This also applies to companies that work with open source software and strengthen digital sovereignty.

(see also -> 'Procurement' in Chapter '06 Work' on page 99)

Skilled workers and good education and training for Berlin

The shortage of labour and skilled workers has become one of the main problems across all economic sectors. In Berlin, this is exacerbated by the fact that people are unable to move here because they cannot find affordable housing. With a new housing policy, we will tackle not only the problems faced by the people of Berlin, but also the challenges facing Berlin as a business location.

In future, more support must be given to skilled workers in Berlin, rather than simply poaching well-trained people from other regions. Far too many young people in Berlin are still leaving school without the prospect of an apprenticeship. Large companies, in particular, are shirking their responsibilities in this regard and providing too few training places. The same applies to the public sector, the Senate departments and the district offices. We want to support the already significant contributions made by the skilled trades in this area by providing greater support for training consortia.

We want to provide tangible relief from training costs for companies that provide apprenticeships through the apprenticeship levy. However, it is also true that many job profiles have not been adapted to developments for far too long. Trends towards specialisation require new forms of training consortia.

Policy on commercial premises and rents

The availability of affordable commercial premises is a key prerequisite for the city's continued economic development. For many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly those in the

craft trades, production-related service sectors or the social economy, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain their business premises in the face of rising commercial rents. For many businesses, the lack of space makes it practically impossible to develop further or grow.

We want to drive forward the creation of new commercial parks. Together with the Chamber of Crafts and other stakeholders, we also intend to support new approaches, such as co-operative business parks. However, unlike the coalition, we do not wish to abandon the concept of state-owned business parks; rather, we intend to provide the state-owned company WISTA, as a location developer, with additional capital to create more 'Business Parks 2.0' in Berlin following the pilot project in Lichtenberg. In the next legislative term, we will establish several further business parks, providing greater and longer-term support in the form of affordable commercial premises, particularly for female entrepreneurs, the skilled trades, the migrant economy and businesses serving the public good.

We are also committed to strengthening Berliner Bo-denfonds GmbH, which was founded in 2020, and to increasing the acquisition fund's capital, so that we can make strategic property and land acquisitions in this growing city and build up land reserves.

Properties acquired in this way can also be used to provide sites for strategic business locations and for businesses at risk of displacement, through leasehold agreements on affordable terms.

The rapidly rising commercial rents and the lack of protective commercial tenancy law are a growing problem, particularly for smaller, neighbourhood-based businesses and the socio-cultural infrastructure in our city. Commercial rents in Berlin have been rising by an average of 9 per cent per year since 2012. As a result, more and more shops – particularly in the catering and retail sectors, but also nurseries and other facilities – are at risk of being forced out. We will propose, via the Bundesrat, a permanent statutory cap on commercial rents. This will also include a statutory rent moratorium lasting several years. There must also be a ban on letting commercial properties stand vacant in order to prevent speculation.

Skilled trades and retail

The needs of the skilled trades must be given greater consideration in the economic transport concept. Tradespeople and care services must be able to use delivery zones and be provided with dedicated parking facilities so that they can reach customers and carry out their work. Closer cooperation with the skilled trades sector – and in particular with the Chamber of Skilled Trades – is a key focus of our economic policy, both in terms of protection against ever-rising commercial rents and in ensuring business succession and strengthening apprenticeship networks within the skilled trades sector.

The retail sector is one of the largest employers in Berlin. Businesses are suffering massively from the boom in online retail and the trend in commercial rents. Whilst small shops are being squeezed out of sought-after city-centre locations, other neighbourhoods are becoming desolate because large department store sites and high streets stand empty.

Now more than ever, the question arises of strategic land-use management by the public sector. We want the State of Berlin to examine whether and how large commercial properties and shopping centres owned by the state – which are currently vacant or at risk of becoming so – can be taken over, with a view to developing them in the public interest as social hubs for their neighbourhoods. This should create commercial spaces that are also attractive and affordable for smaller retailers. By linking these spaces with social infrastructure and cultural and public facilities such as libraries and childcare centres, attractive and vibrant neighbourhood hubs should emerge.

We want to strengthen hybrid models in the retail sector so that small high-street retailers and larger department stores can compete with purely online retailers. To this end, these businesses must be supported in their digitalisation efforts. With the help of independent platforms, smaller retailers should also be given access to online trade on fair terms. To support retailers with logistics and dispatch and to relieve neighbourhoods of delivery traffic, we want to promote local logistics centres and collection services. We intend to campaign in the Bundesrat for a legislative initiative modelled on the French system, which

tackles the subsidisation of parcel deliveries by retailers such as Amazon and other forms of dumping.

Industrial policy

We want to future-proof Berlin's industry, successfully transform it and increase industry's share of value added in Berlin. A stable industrial sector secures good, collectively agreed jobs, including at suppliers and industry-related service providers. It is a prerequisite for healthy economic development and the successful climate-neutral transformation of production.

The restructuring of European industry must be supported by the state through financial and regulatory measures. A European response to the Industry Recovery Act (IRA) in the USA is essential. Only with massive financial investment can Europe become a pioneer in smart transformation.

The energy crisis, supply chain issues and digitalisation are putting industry under pressure to transform. We see these changes not only as a threat, but also as an opportunity. We want to develop the region into a pioneer of CO₂-neutral production and thus tap into new development potential. In the short term, however, companies must also be enabled to maintain production in the face of high energy prices. The industrial electricity price scheme, for which applications can be submitted from 2027, is subject to the condition that at least 50 per cent of the grant must be invested in renewable energy or improved energy efficiency. We are advocating for appropriate measures for SMEs, such as support with applications through the business development agency or a fund for CO₂-reducing investments.

Berlin's strength lies in its vast research and higher education landscape and its vibrant start-up scene. We must make even better use of these advantages for the city's existing industrial companies, so that innovative ideas from Berlin are also produced in Berlin. To this end, we want universities, industrial companies and IT service providers to be brought together in innovation networks . This collaboration should be fostered through

research partnerships, the promotion of dual study programmes and supervised student dissertations.

Together with businesses and trade unions, we want to ensure that innovative products and production lines are established in Berlin, for example in the field of storage technologies. In the battery sector, we can succeed in building new value chains and, with a strategy for manufacturing, second life and recycling, establish a benchmark for a sustainable circular economy.

This requires an industrial policy that addresses the challenges faced by existing businesses and promotes concrete solutions for innovation and future development. We are therefore committed to ensuring that the ReTra Network Berlin-Brandenburg, which supports the automotive and supplier industries in their transformation, continues beyond 2026. This practice-oriented network, with the direct involvement of social partners and business support organisations, can serve as a model for other sectors. The work of the Steering Committee for the Transformation of Berlin's Industry (SKIP) and the projects under the Master Plan for Berlin as an Industrial City (MPI) must be continued and intensified in this spirit. Particular emphasis must be placed on links with the research and higher education sector. We will rectify the coalition's cuts to the implementation of the measures set out in the Master Plan will be rectified.

We are committed to establishing a Berlin Industrial Holding Company. This body is intended to support sector-relevant industrial enterprises facing crisis by acquiring state shareholdings, thereby safeguarding value chains in Berlin. The influence exerted through public shareholdings should also be utilised to drive forward the socio-ecological transformation.

Transformation and decarbonisation

Over the coming years, we must succeed in transforming production processes and, in the long term, completely replacing fossil fuels. This transition to climate neutrality will dramatically alter financing

conditions, supply chains and infrastructure requirements.

The Berlin-Brandenburg capital region is ideally placed for successful decarbonisation and already has a high share of renewable energy. Brandenburg, with its vast surrounding areas and focus on sustainable energy production, is the perfect partner for Berlin's industry. Sustainable green production is possible in Berlin-Brandenburg; we will set the necessary course.

The transformation of the economy must not take place at the expense of employees and jobs. Through adequate training, we must ensure that employees remain on board and are equipped to tackle the new tasks. We want to enable more companies to provide training for their employees and support continuing education networks. We are promoting the appointment of skills advisors within companies, as is already the case in other federal states. These advisors should be drawn from the workforce; they will identify skills needs, assist with the preparation the necessary measures and applying for funding, and monitor progress.

Local content and reshoring

Shortages of vital medicines and production stoppages due to disruptions in global supply chains have highlighted the importance of local production throughout the entire value chain. We are therefore advocating for local content regulations and the reshoring of outsourced production. The disputes surrounding the Stadler railcar factory in Pankow have shown that public contracts do not automatically secure jobs. In public tendering and procurement, therefore, attention should be paid not only to local content but also to job security and commitments to the location. Contracts and investment grants must, as far as possible, be linked to commitments to the location, transformation plans developed in consultation with works councils, and concrete training agreements for employees. We also want to seek ways to

counter investment strikes by owners. We want to secure employment and sites in the chemical sector as well as in industry, whilst at the same time building up new economic sectors – sectors that should not only have their overheads in Berlin, but also produce locally within the region.

Digital economy, AI, digitalisation

The digital economy, with around 100,000 employees, is one of the most important growth sectors in Berlin. Start-ups and tech companies are booming. We want to ensure that start-ups and digital companies find favourable conditions here to emerge, grow and establish themselves permanently in Berlin. Developments and applications relating to artificial intelligence should be given particular support. The focus here should be on practical application and cooperation with existing Berlin-based companies. We want to continue to support spin-offs from Berlin's universities. In doing so, open-source projects and platform cooperatives should be promoted alongside profit-oriented approaches.

The exploitation by digital intermediary services ('platforms') is scandalous. According to research, the minimum hourly wage on the Uber platform is around €16.00, whilst the commission amounts to up to 25 per cent of the fare – on average also around €16.00 per hour. This means that such a platform operates with a commission rate of around 100 per cent! Drivers could earn more – up to twice as much – if they owned the platform. We want to make this possible. That is why we are campaigning for the development of alternative intermediary platforms.

It is just as important to support existing businesses in their digital transformation. The Red-Red-Green Senate founded the Berlin Digital Agency and set up the 'Digital Bonus' funding programme. It was a mistake for the CDU to discontinue the Digital Bonus. Small and medium-sized Berlin businesses, in particular, need help with specific digitalisation projects. Through the Digital Bonus, 37 million euros were spent in a short space of time, reaching almost 900 businesses. Sole traders, micro-enterprises

and small enterprises together accounted for over 95 per cent of the businesses receiving funding. We will resume digital funding.

Digitalisation is fostering new forms of employment. Many new jobs are being created, particularly in the IT sector and among start-ups. Unfortunately, precarious employment conditions often prevail in these very sectors: so-called 'click-working' and 'gig-working' give rise to supposedly self-employed work without social security cover. Together with the trade unions, we want to work to ensure that good working conditions can be achieved in these sectors too and that health and safety regulations are complied with. We are considering a moratorium on the construction of new data centres, which tie up enormous capacity in the electricity grid but create only a few jobs. We reject any watering down of the ban on Sunday opening for the retail sector, particularly by digital micro-supermarkets; we want to reduce the number of Sundays on which shops are open.

The digitalisation of Berlin's public administration is being run into the ground by the old Senate. Yet there is huge potential here for faster and less bureaucratic administration, both for citizens and for businesses. Last but not least, we also want to support the digital players in Berlin, with whom the administration could develop new solutions. Open-source providers and capable start-ups should play a greater role here. We want to support all businesses in this endeavour and prepare all public authorities in Berlin to process payments via free European online services, in order to establish an alternative to US providers such as Visa, Mastercard, Apple Pay and PayPal. It is not yet too late to establish a European online payment service that is significantly cheaper and reliably guarantees data protection.

Trade Fairs and Tourism

Tourism is a key economic factor for Berlin, not only because hotels and restaurants rely on visitors from outside the city. The tourism boom is also associated with negative

side effects: beer bikes and coaches on the streets, wheeled suitcases and party noise, the displacement of shops and businesses in established neighbourhoods by commercial monostructures geared towards tourism, and the loss of housing due to providers such as Airbnb. We therefore want to see sustainable and city-friendly development towards gentle tourism.

Visitors should be distributed more evenly across the city. Instead of new hotel developments in already overcrowded hotspots, we want an overarching strategy for city-wide tourism management and a hotel development plan coordinated with the boroughs.

Successful trade fair formats do more than just bring visitors to Berlin. It is also invaluable for Berlin-based businesses when exhibitors and trade visitors from all over the world meet on their own doorstep. That is why we need a strong and innovative Berlin trade fair organisation under public ownership. We reject plans to privatise the trade fair organisation. The example of the IFA shows that our trade fair organisation must retain its own trade fair formats and develop new ones. We must not hand over the exhibitions to external organisers who leave the Berlin Exhibition Centre merely in the role of a hall landlord and move to another city at the first opportunity. To strengthen Berlin's position as a venue for medium-sized conferences with several thousand participants, capacity in this category must be expanded.

The arms industry is not the future – promote conversion.

We oppose the conversion of civilian production into arms production and the establishment of further arms industry and research in Berlin. We advocate maintaining the existing 'civil clauses' at universities and introducing such clauses in economic development programmes. The global arms race does not create security; rather, it increases the risk of war. The production of armaments is also not sustainable, unless one assumes that military spending will continue to rise sharply in the coming decades. The switch to arms production undermines the efforts of recent years towards a sustainable

transformation of industry and the shift towards innovative products. Companies that rely on armaments are foregoing necessary investments in the future and transformation efforts, and are instead prioritising short-term profits. Armaments manufacturers should be converted to civilian production in consultation with employee representatives and trade unions, so that jobs there are secured on a long-term and sustainable basis.

Promoting an alternative and solidarity-based economy

We want to improve the framework conditions for the various forms of alternative economic activity and, in particular, support cooperatives, collective enterprises and social entrepreneurs. It is not only in experimental settings that companies can succeed within capitalism by adopting different approaches to ownership, decision-making mechanisms and the measurement of business success.

We want to provide a shared space for businesses that wish to develop common tools to act cooperatively and strengthen the local economy. This includes the long-term establishment of contact points and networks that raise the profile of and support social and solidarity-based economic models. Advisory services for start-ups and existing businesses should be expanded to support the socio-ecological transition. Public funding and contracts must be consistently linked to social and environmental criteria so that enterprises focused on the common good are given a fair chance. A state-led strategy and a dedicated economic cluster for the social economy can help to connect the diverse range of stakeholders and strengthen their impact.

Since the 1980s, the field of economics has been dominated by the neoclassical school of thought, which stands in stark contrast to the diversity of economic theory and the real-world developments in market-based and state-regulated systems of global production relations. We also aim to strengthen alternative academic economic research in Berlin and link it with a

‘Research and Advisory Centre for Alternative Economics’. We would welcome the establishment of more chairs at Berlin’s universities with a focus on alternative economic research.

06 Arbsit

Decent Work

Good working conditions are the foundation of a good life. Good work is adequately paid and protected by collective agreements, involves employee participation, is meaningful and does not cause ill health. This must also apply to care work – which is often unpaid. We want to reduce working people's weekly working hours without any loss of pay and ensure that they receive a larger share of the wealth they produce. Wherever the State of Berlin can influence working conditions directly or indirectly, we will make 'Good Work' a reality. This includes jobs covered by collective agreements and secure employment at state-owned enterprises, their subsidiaries, social service providers and all organisations that receive public funding. For all other organisations, we want to create the framework conditions for 'Good Work'. This includes better monitoring and enforcement of protective regulations, as well as advisory services for groups of employees who are particularly vulnerable.

Decent work at state-owned subsidiaries and ...

In state-owned companies and wherever the State of Berlin can directly influence employees' working conditions, we are committed to secure employment relationships with pay in line with collective agreements. This applies in particular to state-owned subsidiaries. We therefore want all state-owned holdings to be bound by collective agreements and for the pay levels of all subsidiaries and all other state-owned holdings to be brought into line with the level of the public sector collective agreement of the respective parent company. Furthermore, service subsidiaries that have been outsourced to circumvent collective agreements – such as BT, CFM, VSG or TGM GmbH – should be integrated into the parent company without delay, including under company law. Only in this way can full equality for employees be achieved.

... regarding independent organisations

Independent providers make an indispensable contribution to the city's social care provision and form part of the social infrastructure.

Employees of independent providers must therefore not have worse working conditions than those employed directly by the state. There must be unrestricted refinancing where providers pay their employees in line with the TV-L. Grants must be adjusted accordingly in the event of collective agreement pay rises, so that grant recipients do not have to finance these increases by cutting back on their services. The refinanced collective agreement benefits must also include all supplementary benefits provided for in the collective agreement; employees of independent organisations must finally also receive the capital city allowance. Alongside secure refinancing, there must also be a legal obligation in future for grant recipients to pay their employees in accordance with the collective agreement.

We intend to use a transparency database to show, even at this early stage, which organisations pay in accordance with collective agreements. For the social sector, the long-term aim is a fully funded, generally binding sectoral collective agreement based on the TV-L. In the field of employment and education providers, we continue to support the social partnership initiative for a generally binding collective agreement.

When refinancing the work of independent organisations, account must also be taken of the costs incurred by these organisations as a result of the work carried out by the works councils established within them.

In our cooperation with charitable and social institutions run by church organisations, we will work to ensure that employees there receive full protection under labour law and that so-called 'church labour law' is not applied. We expressly support the trade unions' campaign for collective agreements and full workplace co-determination in institutions run by church organisations. At the federal level, we are campaigning to ensure that social workers and other professionals who have a special relationship of trust with the people they work with are granted the right to refuse to give evidence under Section 53(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Extension of the capital city allowance

In 2020, we introduced the capital city allowance for public sector employees because the cost of living in Berlin has become increasingly expensive. This allowance must also be granted to staff at universities, independent organisations and in the indirect state service. We will put an end to this unequal treatment.

Defending and further developing the Tendering and Procurement Act

Berlin awards public contracts worth billions every year. The Infrastructure Special Fund will further increase the importance of public procurement. It is a key instrument for promoting decent work and collective bargaining coverage in the private sector. The public sector has a particular responsibility in this regard. Thanks to the collective bargaining compliance clause we introduced, public funds are only awarded to contractors who pay in accordance with collective agreements. We are firmly opposed to this rule being undermined by raising the thresholds.

We want to further develop the Tendering and Procurement Act to make it more user-friendly, whilst simplifying and digitising the process. The administrative burden on contracting authorities and companies submitting tenders should be kept to a minimum. In particular, we want to significantly ease the burden on companies bound by collective agreements by exempting them from the obligation to prove compliance with collective agreements through pre-qualification procedures and the social security fund procedure used in the construction industry. In doing so, we are creating a genuine incentive to rejoin collective bargaining agreements. We want to reward businesses that fulfil their social responsibilities. With the help of a wage escalation and price adjustment clause, we aim to ensure that, for contracts with a duration of several years, contractors can pass on collective agreement pay rises to their employees.

We are committed to ensuring that tenders also set out binding requirements regarding staffing levels and quality criteria for a service, for example for school catering or cleaning contracts. This will prevent companies

win tenders solely by intensifying workloads at the expense of employees. So-called subcontracting chains are frequently abused to circumvent the obligation to adhere to collective agreements. The general public then bears the brunt of the damage. We therefore wish to limit subcontracting chains – in which the same sub-service is repeatedly subcontracted through a chain of companies – to a maximum of two links.

The provisions of the Public Procurement Act must be effectively monitored so that they can have the desired effect. Effective monitoring also includes on-site inspections. The Berlin Construction Industry Inspection and Investigation Service (SoKa Bau) should be permanently integrated within the framework of the law. As employees are best placed to know whether working conditions are being adhered to correctly, a reporting and complaints office should be set up for the employees of contractors. Furthermore, the contracting authorities and the monitoring group must be able to liaise with the works councils of the contractors.

Accurate recording of working hours is crucial for verifying compliance with minimum wages and health and safety regulations. When awarding public contracts, particularly in the construction sector, the use of tamper-proof electronic time-recording systems must therefore be mandatory. We want to further reduce the number of contracting authorities in the State of Berlin. The contracting authorities in the boroughs must share their data and experiences with companies across borough boundaries. This will enable breaches to be better identified and prevented.

More public holidays and Sundays off

Berlin has ten statutory public holidays a year, which is the lowest number in the country. We will therefore introduce at least one further statutory public holiday. Furthermore, we want to ensure that employees do not lose a public holiday if it happens to fall on a Sunday in a given year. We will amend the Berlin Public Holidays Act to stipulate that the following Monday is a day off if a public holiday falls on a Sunday. Late-opening shops ('Spätis') are particularly important in times of

In the face of rising prices in cafés, bars, pubs and restaurants, these provide important alternatives for people to meet and help ensure the economic independence of migrants. We want to examine whether exemptions are possible exclusively for late-night shops, including through amendments to the Shop Opening Hours Act, provided that health and safety standards are guaranteed, Sunday trading is ensured by the owner of the late-night shop, and there is a clear distinction from the rest of the retail sector.

We oppose the expansion of Sunday working. It is at the expense of families, precarious workers and those who provide care work. The ban on Sunday working must therefore be better monitored and enforced. We reject any watering down of the ban on Sunday opening for the retail sector, particularly by digital micro-supermarkets; we want to reduce the number of Sundays on which shops are open.

Better working conditions for daytime cleaning staff

Building cleaners ensure that we can work safely and effectively in our businesses and public administrations. But they are expected to clean when no one is watching. That is why they are given split shifts and are expected to work just a few hours early in the morning and in the evening. This is not enough to live on and is extremely family-unfriendly. We are therefore campaigning for cleaning in public buildings to take place during the day and in continuous shifts. When awarding cleaning contracts, it must be stipulated that at least a fixed proportion of the cleaning is carried out as daytime cleaning.

Strengthening the Berlin State Office for Occupational Safety, Health Protection and Technical Safety (LAGetSi)

Even the best health and safety regulations are ineffective if compliance is not monitored and breaches are not penalised. The Berlin State Office for Occupational Safety, Health Protection and Technical Safety (LAGetSi) must be further strengthened in terms of staffing so that effective monitoring of occupational health and safety

in Berlin-based businesses. During the COVID-19 pandemic and the hot summer, it became clear just how important it is, for example, to monitor hygiene, infection control and heat protection regulations. We are committed to ensuring that the LAGetSi takes on a greater role in auditing the recording of working hours at private employers. In addition to increased on-site inspections, it should be possible to require businesses, on a random basis, to submit their documented working hours electronically within a specified timeframe.

Specialised Public Prosecutor's Office for Union Busting

The formation and work of works councils are a vital democratic asset and must not be obstructed. If employers do so, they are liable to prosecution. Under the Red-Red-Green coalition, arrangements were made to ensure that such cases always end up with the same specialist department within the public prosecutor's office (the so-called 'specialist public prosecutor's office'). This department must be strengthened in terms of expertise so that it can investigate complaints effectively and ensure that union-busting – the disruption of trade union and works council activities – is actually prosecuted.

Good Work Officers

The 'Good Work Officers' in the district offices, created on the initiative of Die Linke, are a success story; they are now in place in three Berlin districts. The officers act as points of contact for employee representatives and trade unions in the district and ensure that the promotion of good working conditions plays a role in administrative measures at all levels. We also want to appoint 'Good Work Officers' in the remaining boroughs.

Migration and Decent Work

Foreign workers, particularly those from Eastern and Southern Europe or with experience of fleeing their home countries, are particularly affected in Berlin by

Exploitation. This is often caused by a lack of language and legal knowledge, an insecure residency status and a lack of accommodation. We want to further expand the advisory and support services for this group of workers, such as the Berlin Advisory Centre for Migration and Decent Work (BEMA). Contact and advice centres are also to be established at district level. In addition, outreach counselling and engagement within migrant communities are to be strengthened.

The provision of part-time language courses, which also impart basic knowledge of employment law, is to be expanded in order to empower this group of workers against exploitation.

For migrant workers, the swift recognition of their foreign professional qualifications is of paramount importance. Otherwise, they are employed in roles below their qualifications or undertake skilled work without being paid accordingly. In Berlin, the recognition process can sometimes take several years. This is particularly dramatic given the shortage of skilled workers in many sectors. We want to ensure faster recognition by the professional bodies, in particular by making it easier to demonstrate qualifications through a repeat practical examination. The State Office for Health and Social Affairs (LaGeSo) must speed up the recognition of qualifications in healthcare professions. Adaptation courses must be offered for all healthcare professions and with a sufficient number of places. In-work language courses and projects aimed at improving the labour market integration of migrants must be strengthened. Access to the labour market for refugees must be made easier.

Trade registers and other authorities that come into contact with migrant workers should be made more aware of the problem of bogus self-employment and labour exploitation. Criminal prosecution of labour exploitation – which largely affects migrant workers – must be stepped up.

More apprenticeship places

Vocational training is essential for young people's participation in society and their future prospects. Furthermore, training is indispensable for meeting future demand for skilled workers. It is therefore unacceptable that, every year in Berlin, thousands of applicants are left without a training place. Through the consistent introduction and implementation of the apprenticeship levy, we aim to ease the burden on companies that provide apprenticeships and thus ensure more apprenticeship places. The levy model that has just been adopted covers only a small proportion of apprenticeship contracts. We will ensure that companies providing apprenticeships are reimbursed the full costs for all apprentices.

We want to strengthen joint training schemes. These make it easier, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, to participate in vocational training. This leads to more apprenticeship places and an improvement in the quality of training within these businesses. That is why we want to do more to bring companies together for collaborative training and provide them with greater support during the training period.

The State of Berlin and state-owned enterprises must also play their part and offer more training places. Through better career guidance in schools, facilitating work placements and tailored placement services, we will improve the transition from school to apprenticeship. Models involving so-called 'education chains', which guarantee continuous support from school days right through to the start of an apprenticeship, can serve as a model. During the apprenticeship, we want to reduce the drop-out rate by providing support services for apprentices and businesses.

We support the DGB Youth's initiative for an 'Azubi-Werk' in Berlin. What already exists for students should also be offered to apprentices. Modelled on the facility in Munich, a Berlin 'Azubi-Werk' should provide affordable accommodation for apprentices and offer and coordinate other forms of support, such as advisory services, including a complaints office for apprentices.

Work-based training

The transformation of the economy is leading to massive changes in the nature of work within companies and requires employees to acquire different and new skills. To ensure that workers are not left behind in this process and that the demand for skilled labour is secured in the long term, in-work training is crucial. There are numerous instruments for promoting skills development, but these are far too rarely utilised by Berlin-based companies. We want to use economic and transformation support schemes to encourage companies to enter into skills development agreements. These agreements will set out which skills must be in place in future and how the training will be delivered.

We want to promote continuing professional development networks and the creation of staff reserves, so that companies can grant their employees time off for training even when there is a staff shortage.

Secure and good jobs, even for the self-employed working alone

More than one in ten people in employment in Berlin are now working as so-called solo self-employed workers, particularly in the creative industries, the education sector and in new forms of digital employment.

Many have made a conscious choice to pursue this type of employment. We are committed to tackling precarious work, exploitation and bogus self-employment in this sector too.

We support the development and establishment of sector-specific minimum fees and model contracts that take the interests of contractors into account. Where the public sector acts as the client or indirectly funds the contract through grants, it must lead by example and pay adequate fees. We will structure public procurement in such a way that it becomes

freelancers to apply and to increase their chances of being awarded contracts.

We are committed to creating publicly funded co-working spaces in the boroughs where solo self-employed people can work together at low rental costs. We want to create a networking and further training programme for solo self-employed people, in collaboration with trade unions and professional associations, similar to the 'Haus der Selbstständigen' in Leipzig, which is also intended to serve as a platform for representing their collective interests.

Pregnancy places a particular financial burden on solo self-employed people, as they are not entitled to maternity leave. We therefore want to grant maternity allowance to self-employed people in need through a state hardship scheme during the period immediately before and after childbirth. This should be implemented without red tape and, if necessary, with a retrospective means test, as was the case with Berlin's COVID-19 support for the self-employed.

No exploitation in platform work

Almost 6 per cent of people in Germany earn their main income through digital platform work for Uber, Lieferando and similar companies. This form of work is particularly widespread in Berlin. Platform work is often associated with bogus self-employment, unscrupulous subcontractors and brutal work management via algorithms. We are therefore campaigning for the consistent implementation of the EU Platform Work Directive into federal law. In particular, a requirement for direct employment for platform-based delivery services and general contractor liability for all platforms are essential. At the Berlin level, increased inspections of platform work are to be used to combat undeclared work, breaches of the minimum wage and inadequate health and safety standards.

Enforce the Evidence Act

The Employment Evidence Act stipulates that employees are entitled to a written employment contract which clearly

who the employer is and what the terms and conditions of employment are. Otherwise, it is very difficult to enforce one's rights. The Employment Evidence Act is very frequently breached, particularly in precarious sectors and in platform work. The State of Berlin could intervene here and impose fines on employers – but it does not do so. We want to introduce independent inspections to ensure compliance with the Employment Evidence Act and finally punish breaches consistently.

Improving protection against heat

Climate change is also affecting our working conditions. The number of days lost due to heat and sun exposure has risen sharply over the last ten years. We want to reverse this trend. We are committed to improving heat protection for workers in Berlin. For state employees, we want better heat protection plans, direct heat protection through shading and cooling facilities, as well as paid cooling breaks and optional working time arrangements that exclude the hottest times of the day. For employees in Berlin's private sector, heat protection is to be improved through additional advice and inspections by the LAGetSi.

State minimum wage and public procurement minimum wage set at the same level

We want a state minimum wage and a public procurement minimum wage set at the same level, which protect against poverty and enable a standard of living above the basic income support threshold even in old age. Furthermore, the minimum wage should rise regularly in line with general wage trends. The state minimum wage and the public procurement minimum wage should therefore be linked to the entry-level pay scale of the TV-L.

We want to launch a Bundesrat initiative to amend the Minimum Wage Act so that employees in workshops for people with disabilities also receive the minimum wage. The organisations running these workshops must not be left to bear the additional costs alone.

Strengthening collective bargaining coverage

The European Minimum Wage Directive obliges Germany to present an action plan to strengthen collective bargaining coverage. We want the State of Berlin – within the scope of its state policy powers – to ensure an increase in collective bargaining coverage. We envisage four main levers for this: compliance with collective agreements in public procurement must be consistently enforced and monitored. Independent organisations and grant recipients must be required to pay in line with collective agreements and be provided with appropriate funding. In economic development, payment in line with collective agreements must once again be introduced as a funding criterion. Maximum use must be made of the option to declare collective agreements generally binding at state level.

Chamber of Labour

The Left Party will examine, in close consultation with the trade unions, whether a Chamber of Labour should be established for the State of Berlin. Such chambers already exist in the federal states of Bremen and Saarland, as well as in Austria and Luxembourg. They help shape vocational training and qualifications, provide advice, conduct research and are involved in legislative processes. Such a chamber can only be considered if it is ensured that it does not weaken existing employee representative bodies.

Time for education is not a luxury

Continuing education benefits society as a whole and is not a luxury. Time off for training lays the foundation for lifelong learning and can be used in three areas: political education, professional development and training for voluntary work. Nevertheless, only a very small proportion of employees make use of their entitlement to time off for training. Many employees are unaware that they can take paid leave to attend training events. Furthermore, employees fear adverse consequences for their employment relationship if they make use of educational leave. We therefore want to oblige employers

to inform employees of their entitlement to educational leave and the risk of it lapsing at the end of the year. This is also intended to allay fears that the employer might disapprove of employees taking such leave. If the employer fails to fulfil this duty to inform, the entitlement to educational leave does not lapse at the end of the year but is carried over to the following year.

Publicly funded employment

Whilst the federal government harasses and defames unemployed people, it is largely phasing out labour market support schemes that actually help the unemployed back into work. In Berlin, too, following the expiry without replacement of the 'Solidarity Basic Income' (SGE) employment programme, there are practically no provision left for the long-term unemployed. We want to promote work rather than unemployment. We will therefore set up a new public programme for employment promotion. Instead of poorly paid, compulsory schemes, we want to offer socially meaningful work on collectively agreed terms. The aim must be to open up long-term career prospects for the unemployed and to create access to the primary labour market. There is plenty to do in Berlin!

Where employment schemes run by the Federal Employment Agency () take place with Berlin's involvement, the remuneration must be topped up by the state to at least the state minimum wage.

07 Social Services and Inclusion

Social infrastructure for social cohesion and social participation

Combating exclusion, loneliness and poverty is key to social cohesion and to the stability and functioning of our democracy. A society in which more and more people feel they do not belong is losing its foundations. Whilst the number of millionaires and billionaires in Germany – and also in Berlin – continues to rise...

As inequality increases, so too does the number of people who, because of their income, do not – or no longer – see themselves as full members of this society and who do not feel acknowledged, heard or seen. We will no longer tolerate this.

Key factors in the fight against poverty are determined at federal level. These include the level of the statutory minimum wage, basic income support and pensions. Yet instead of making effective use of these policy levers to reduce poverty, people on low incomes are increasingly being pitted against one another. At the Berlin level, we will use every opportunity to counter the federal government's misguided policies with a policy of solidarity, respect, recognition and the practical fight against poverty.

Berlin needs a strong, inclusive and social infrastructure

Berlin is colourful, diverse and vibrant. Yet in no other major city in Germany do prosperity and poverty lie so close together as they do in Berlin. Berlin is characterised by high rents, precarious jobs, child poverty and people who struggle every month just to make ends meet. People in Berlin affected by poverty, social exclusion or health and social impairments can currently still rely on a city-wide network that catches them when they fall, advises them, supports them and stabilises their daily lives. This network offers support in securing

housing, helps them cope with personal crises, refers them to specialist support services, provides access to medical care and psychosocial support, and empowers those affected to participate independently in social life once again. This social infrastructure includes independent social advice services, debt and insolvency advice services, advice services on decent work and for the unemployed, neighbourhood centres, youth, older people's and family drop-in centres, and many other services that help people to participate in society and make life in Berlin as worth living as possible.

Loneliness and social isolation have been on the rise for years and have intensified since the COVID-19 pandemic. They affect people of all ages and from all walks of life. Loneliness is often a manifestation of structural problems such as poverty, excessive stress, marginalisation and a lack of participation. It impairs health and quality of life and, in the long term, jeopardises social cohesion. We call for a binding state programme to combat loneliness, combining outreach measures with the social prescribing model and district-based link workers. The aim is to create an active, socially and spatially anchored infrastructure that reaches people before isolation becomes chronic. In addition, we want to establish neighbourhood canteens as low-threshold, local venues for affordable meals and social interaction, particularly in socially deprived neighbourhoods.

Berlin's social support network is extensive and highly specialised in its individual areas, but at the same time it is organised in a highly decentralised manner and is severely fragmented. As a result, many people seeking help are often unaware that there is a suitable support service available for their situation. We therefore want to set up a central helpline for social problems, which those seeking help can contact. Through a referral service, they should be directed to the most appropriate support services. We want to specifically expand outreach street social work in order to effectively reach and support particularly hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups. To ensure that we include everyone, communication from public authorities should, as a matter of principle, also be in plain language. We want to reach and involve everyone.

The district social services departments have been overburdened for years. Processing times for certain social benefits are considerable. We therefore want to provide the social services departments with more staff and design digital processes in such a way that they lead to rapid assistance for citizens and relieve the burden on staff.

Effectively combating poverty in all its dimensions and forms

We want to resolutely combat poverty in all its forms and dimensions. For Berlin, an intersectional and multi-dimensional analysis of poverty is particularly relevant because several risk factors converge very closely here: high housing costs, above-average child poverty, a large proportion of people with a migration background, and starkly differing living conditions across the districts. To gain a comprehensive insight into the city's social situation, we intend to bring together reporting on poverty, social issues and health.

Child poverty is a particular cause for concern, as it is far higher in Berlin than the national average. This is not only a problem for those directly affected, but for our urban society as a whole. Children living in poverty have poorer access to education, fewer career prospects and less opportunity to shape their own lives. And one thing is clear: child poverty is always linked to parental poverty and is passed down through the generations. We are committed to breaking this cycle. For Berlin's children and young people, we want to maintain free school lunches in primary schools and the free student travel pass.

Low wages and disruptions to working lives, coupled with skyrocketing rents and persistently high inflation, mean that many older Berliners are affected by poverty. At the federal level, Die Linke therefore continues to campaign for an increase in pension levels to safeguard living standards, for minimum pensions that protect against poverty, and for a minimum wage that ensures pension entitlements sufficient to cover basic living costs. At state and district level, wherever we can exert influence, we aim to mitigate the effects of

poverty in old age wherever we can exert influence, so as to enable all older Berliners to enjoy a quality of life that meets their needs, regardless of their financial circumstances. Due to shame, lack of knowledge and bureaucratic hurdles, far too many people do not claim basic social security benefits, such as the basic income support for the elderly or housing benefit, even though they are actually entitled to them. We are committed to ensuring that this so-called 'hidden poverty' is brought to light and that people are informed about their entitlements so that they can make use of them.

A vibrant and socially inclusive urban community requires freely accessible public spaces that can also be used for voluntary work. Many of these spaces already exist. Schools, libraries, youth centres, adult education centres and other municipal buildings often stand empty outside their opening hours. We are therefore committed to opening up and making better use of existing infrastructure. Free public spaces should therefore be easily accessible to clubs, initiatives and self-organised groups.

-> see chapter '11 Children, Young People, Family' on page 175

Ensuring mobility for people on lower incomes too

Getting from A to B safely and quickly, even if you don't have your own car – whether it's to work, the doctor's, the nursery or a leisure centre – is a basic need and a prerequisite for social inclusion. Public transport is barely affordable for people on low incomes.

We therefore call for the social ticket for Berlin to be reduced back to 9 euros and for a social discount – modelled on the Hamburg scheme – to be introduced for the Deutschlandticket for people receiving social benefits such as basic income support, the basic state pension, housing benefit or benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act, thereby reducing the price for those eligible to 19 euros. We believe that people living in poverty must be able to go on holiday. With the reduced-price Deutschlandticket, it is possible to go on day trips and visit relatives and friends.

The Senate is called upon to reintroduce the old procedure for applying for the Berlin Pass via the citizens' offices, in addition to creating a digital option for obtaining proof of eligibility.

Sanction-free minimum income instead of citizen's income/basic income

The basic income reform introduced by the previous federal government slightly eased the conditions of basic income compared to Hartz IV, even though the standard rates remain far too low to enable people to live in dignity. But at least those affected were no longer required to leave their homes immediately if the costs exceeded the limit set by the jobcentre or social security office. This is extremely important for Berlin, because once you lose your home, you won't find a new one quickly – let alone any affordable one at all. The new basic income support scheme introduced by the black-red federal government once again forces people to leave their homes immediately if they are deemed too expensive. The tightening of sanctions and the requirement to place people in work rather than on training programmes first are unhelpful and serve only to increase the pressure on jobseekers and force them to accept low-paid jobs.

At the federal level, we are therefore campaigning for a sanction-free individual minimum income of currently around 1,400 euros, including housing costs; in regions with high rents, this should be correspondingly higher. The standard rate must be at least 813 euros, because the current rates are set too low. In Berlin, we want to make use of the scope afforded by state law to further highlight the diverse problems faced by unemployed people and others affected by basic income support, such as single parents, people with disabilities, refugees or older people who receive benefits under SGB II, SGB XII or the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG). A few districts have already set up ombudsman services and clearing houses in accordance with Section 16a of SGB II. The clearing houses are a successful model. Acting as guidance points – linked to the Jobcentre yet independent of it – they take a holistic view of the individual. They provide voluntary, sanction-free

and respectfully to addiction and debt counselling services. They provide support with housing and psychosocial issues or with securing childcare. Both benefit recipients and the job centres benefit equally from their referral services.

Within the Jobcentres themselves, we need better staff-to-client ratios so that benefit recipients receive the best possible support. The Jobcentres' digital portals must be accessible to all without barriers.

That is why there must also be access to digital devices that benefit recipients can use if they do not have their own.

We guarantee that the advisory service for the Education and Participation Package will continue in the long term as a reliable component of the social infrastructure of the State of Berlin. To ensure that all children and young people have access to the benefits to which they are entitled, the existing advisory service will be further expanded to be low-threshold, multilingual, local and comprehensive. The aim is to establish a stable, Berlin-wide support structure that provides all children with equal opportunities for education and participation – regardless of their families' social circumstances.

Preventing the loss of housing and ending homelessness

By 2030, the CDU-SPD Senate, like the federal government and the EU, aims to have overcome homelessness in Berlin. In reality, however, homelessness is on the rise due to the irresponsible policies of the federal and state governments. Many people are losing their homes because they can no longer afford the rising rents, because they have health problems, or due to unemployment or relationship breakdowns. An increasing number of children and young people in Berlin are also affected by homelessness. Finding a new home at an affordable price is purely a matter of luck. At the same time, more and more people are living for ever longer in state-provided accommodation under the General Security and Public Order Act (ASOG), because they cannot find a way back into their own homes.

To secure housing and tackle homelessness, a change of course is needed in emergency housing and housing policy. The ‘Housing First’ principle – a home first – should be the guiding principle here.

We will once again make the Strategy Conference on Assistance for the Homeless – in which the state and district administrations network and work together with social welfare organisations and self-help groups for the homeless – a central and permanent institution, in order to accelerate the process of eliminating homelessness by 2030, in other words, practically the day after tomorrow.

Together with individuals, organisations, public authorities, social and health services, volunteers and local communities, we want to develop the strategy conferences into a Berlin Alliance for Solidarity, with the aim of generating new ideas and perspectives on preventing and reducing homelessness. A city that acts in solidarity shows every person: you are seen, you are part of society. At the heart of this are the principle of short lines of communication and a holistic approach: swift and unbureaucratic support, housing and work. These are the three pillars that enable people in need to find their way back to a self-determined life.

Preventing homelessness is key. We want to regulate rents and promote the construction of affordable housing (see the chapter on housing and rents). As there is a shortage of affordable housing, we need binding and higher let-out quotas for the letting of new and re-let state-owned flats and for publicly subsidised flats to people who hold a housing eligibility certificate. Furthermore, 10 per cent of state-owned and publicly subsidised flats that are newly let or re-let should be specifically allocated to people affected by homelessness, subject to rent and occupancy controls. Through the ‘Sicher-Woh’ , we will also require large private landlords to let 10 per cent of their affordable flats to people in particularly urgent housing need.

We will expand the Protected Housing Market. This means that state-owned housing associations and a small number of private landlords will set aside flats specifically for homeless people. We want to introduce a quota for the allocation of homeless families into the Protected Housing Market segment, so that families are given priority. Furthermore, we want to oblige the state-owned housing companies (LWU) and large commercial landlords to make larger flats available for the Protected Housing Market as well.

A realistic regulation regarding the costs of accommodation is essential

Having a home of one's own is of enormous importance to everyone. To prevent homelessness and to ensure that people receiving social security benefits can keep their homes, we will adjust the guideline figures in the so-called 'AV Wohnen' scheme to reflect actual rental costs. This is because the current guideline and threshold figures bear no relation to actual rental costs, and this is a deliberate political choice. This Senate

is driving people into poverty. We demand that the calculation method used to determine the thresholds for reasonable housing costs accurately reflect the actual rental market. No one should be forced to ultimately pay their rent out of their standard benefit allowance – and thus out of a fridge that is already empty. We will reverse the Senate's decision to cut funding for tenants' associations for benefit recipients. People on benefits must be able to defend themselves against unscrupulous landlords.

We want higher top-ups to the guideline figures for accommodation and heating costs if this is the only way for those affected to rent a new flat or keep their current one.

With the so-called 'pilot clause' in the Housing Regulation (AV Wohnen), Berlin actually has an effective tool at its disposal to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find their own accommodation more quickly. It allows for exceptions to the normal thresholds set out in the Housing Regulation. Unfortunately, the pilot clause has hardly been used to date. The trial clause must be further developed so that people can rent a flat

if the rent is lower than the cost of accommodation in shared accommodation. We want to make the trial clause permanent and raise awareness of it widely. This will get more people into their own flats and save money. After all, accommodation in homeless shelters is sometimes twice as expensive.

Social housing support services in the boroughs need more staff and better digital processes to be able to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness quickly and effectively. We oppose evictions that result in homelessness. To prevent or end homelessness, support to overcome specific social difficulties (so-called 'Section 67' assistance) must be strengthened. We want to remove unnecessary barriers to accessing the 'Section 67' support and ensure that people with complex problems can also access it. We want to resume the pilot scheme run by the judicial administration. People facing the threat of eviction should be offered advice following the personal service of a summons and referred to support services. We want to prohibit evictions leading to homelessness carried out by the state-owned housing associations.

Measures such as the 'Housing First' scheme, introduced under a left-wing coalition government, have proved effective. Under this scheme, a homeless person is provided with a flat provided that the rent is covered by the job centre or the social security office. A home is the most important prerequisite for being able to tackle health or employment problems in the first place.

The most expensive and miserable way of preventing homelessness is the administrative accommodation of homeless people under the General Security and Public Order Act (ASOG). We will therefore ensure that all accommodation is contractually bound and subject to quality assurance. This means that minimum standards are in place regarding personal space for residents, child protection measures, hygiene, catering, privacy and the provision of psychosocial support, and that those affected are offered easily accessible services such as debt and addiction counselling, assistance with dealing with the authorities, or support in finding accommodation.

For the temporary accommodation of homeless families with minor children, we want to create sufficient additional ASOG accommodation in Berlin that specialises in housing homeless families and where there are enough staff available to provide advice and support – as well as for other vulnerable groups. To implement this, the State Office for Refugee Affairs and Accommodation must be strengthened in terms of both staffing and organisation.

We want to introduce a quota for the allocation of homeless families within the Protected Housing Market, so that families are given priority. Furthermore, we want to oblige the state-owned housing companies (LWU) and large commercial landlords to make larger flats available for the GMS as well.

We want to expand the year-round, 24/7 accommodation facilities where homeless people can first find a place to settle down and explore new prospects.

We will continue to safeguard the winter shelter scheme from October to April and upgrade it to 'Winter Shelter Plus', which includes counselling services and professional support. We intend to significantly increase the proportion of wheelchair-accessible winter shelter facilities. However, even during the warmer months, there is a need for low-threshold drop-in centres for homeless people. Therefore, some of the winter shelter places should be maintained year-round, and emergency accommodation should be better managed both organisationally and financially. We want to strengthen the heatwave support and outreach social work for people living on the streets.

This also requires 'safe places' – secure spaces that protect against violence, adverse weather conditions and acute stressful situations, whilst at the same time providing a foundation for trust, stability and the development of social connections. Such services offer a temporary refuge and help to break the vicious circle of displacement, insecurity and isolation.

The need for protection, peace and privacy is universal. Even those living in public spaces have a right to dignity and

privacy. Temporary places of refuge – e.g. small accommodation units, shelter containers or supervised private rooms – are not a luxury, but a human rights necessity.

Libraries, local authority offices, hospitals, as well as swimming pools and parks, could be deliberately designed to serve as seasonal ‘safe spaces’ for homeless people.

We campaign against defensive architecture. Public spaces, such as squares, parks and the seating and reclining areas within them, must not be designed in such a way as to prevent certain uses, such as spending long periods of time there or sleeping.

Digital participation for all – humane, fair and inclusive

Digitalisation can make life easier, make knowledge accessible and strengthen democracy – provided it is designed in a socially just way. For us on the Left, digital participation is a fundamental right and part of public services. No one should be excluded – whether due to a lack of devices, knowledge or income.

Digital participation is already a reality in many places today: public libraries provide computers, internet access and support services; community centres offer digital drop-in sessions; and numerous volunteers help older people, refugees and families to get started in the digital world. Adult education centres and civil society initiatives also play a vital role in teaching digital skills and breaking down barriers. These places form the foundation of a digital society based on solidarity and must be supported in the long term and better resourced.

We want a digital transformation that excludes no one and strengthens a modern, efficient state that reaches citizens in every way – digitally and in person. Public administration, education, culture and social services must be accessible both online and in person, with clear points of contact and accessible solutions. Children and young people from families affected by poverty, as well as people affected by pension poverty,

need targeted support: access to devices, stable internet connections, learning spaces and personalised support services, so that they can realise their opportunities for education, social participation and self-determination.

Inclusion

Many people with disabilities live in Berlin. We are committed to ensuring that all Berliners can live self-determined lives – in the labour market, at school, in sport, in healthcare, in terms of mobility and in all other areas of life. Our actions are based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

For us, accessibility and participation are a given in all political decisions. People with disabilities should be actively involved in shaping policy. We ensure that political bodies are accessible, for example through accessible live streaming of meetings of the District Councils (BVV) and the committee meetings of the House of Representatives (AGH). We support the work of the Berlin Disability Parliament and secure its long-term funding.

Furthermore, we aim to increase the proportion of people with disabilities in political bodies such as the BVV and the AGH and to create the necessary framework conditions for this. This includes ensuring that the necessary support services required by people with disabilities to carry out voluntary roles are funded, and establishing a legal basis to provide appropriate remuneration to self-advocates with disabilities for their work on these bodies.

The use of the personal budget under the employer model brings users a significant gain in self-determination. We therefore wish to maintain, facilitate and, in the long term, even expand personal assistance under the employer model on the basis of the collective agreement that has been concluded. To this end, personal assistants must be paid just as well as their colleagues employed by assistance services.

We are consistently driving forward the implementation of the action plan for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, reviewing the compatibility of Berlin's state legislation with the UN CRPD, and consistently and systematically implementing the findings of the judicial review process. All Senate departments should systematically engage with the findings of the Berlin Participation Report.

The special transport service (SFD) requires expansion based on actual demand. The tiered co-payments for journeys on the SFD and for taxi journeys to be reimbursed via the taxi account will be abolished. We intend to increase the maximum reimbursement amount for taxi journeys reimbursed via the taxi account. It must be permanently ensured that people with reduced mobility and those with cognitive disabilities can use public transport even when, for example, lifts are not available at stops.

An inclusive labour market

In recent years, little progress has been made towards a truly inclusive labour market. One reason for this is that inclusion is still not really practised as a cross-cutting issue across all areas of political responsibility. We therefore want to launch a city-wide, cross-departmental initiative for better labour market inclusion.

The public sector in Berlin must also lead by example in this regard. We want to significantly increase the proportion of people with disabilities in training and employment within the Berlin administration. To achieve this, existing barriers to access must be further removed, more accessible workplaces created, all administrative buildings converted and extended to be accessible, and a change in mindset brought about within the administration. State-owned companies must also fulfil their role as role models and fully meet the statutory employment quota for people with disabilities. We will not tolerate the compensation levy being used by public employers in Berlin any longer as a convenient substitute for genuine inclusion. Instead, it should be used specifically for accessible workplaces, training and support services.

We want to make targeted use of public procurement law to strengthen the employment of people with disabilities and inclusive enterprises. To this end, we will expand the social criteria in Berlin's Tendering and Procurement Act and explicitly make the creation of additional jobs and training places for people with disabilities a criterion for awarding contracts. Public contracts should increasingly be awarded to inclusive enterprises so that good examples become visible and genuine participation in the labour market is promoted.

We intend to further develop workshops for people with disabilities (WfbM) so that they fulfil their role of facilitating entry into the mainstream labour market. At the federal level, we are campaigning to ensure that the minimum wage is also paid in WfbM. For us, employment in the mainstream labour market always takes priority. We make use of all the opportunities available within the state to facilitate the use of the budget for work, supported employment, assisted training, job coaching, etc. We ensure that no employment or apprenticeship fails due to Berlin's bureaucracy, and we campaign at federal level for measures to make things easier for people with disabilities.

We are committed to comprehensive protection against violence for people with disabilities living in communal accommodation. The legal framework should be improved so that violence prevention is made mandatory, protection plans are implemented and regular external reviews are ensured. In particular, women's representatives should be established in these types of accommodation and people with disabilities should be actively involved in shaping protection measures.

Accessible building and housing

A truly inclusive city enables everyone to lead a self-determined life in their own home. This requires accessible living spaces, low-barrier living environments, reliable assistance systems and effective support services. That is why we want to significantly increase the proportion of accessible and low-barrier homes in Berlin. To this end, we are focusing on an investment drive for

social and public-interest housing, which creates accessible and inclusive housing options from the outset. Public funds – whether in the form of investments, grant schemes or contracts – must be consistently linked to accessibility. We want to establish a central agency to allocate accessible housing, so that existing accessible housing is allocated to those who actually need it.

Urban development and building policy should be clearly geared towards the creation of inclusive, fully accessible urban neighbourhoods. Our aim is to create vibrant neighbourhoods in which people with and without disabilities live together on an equal footing and in harmony with their local community, in accordance with the principle of ‘design for all’ as set out in Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For genuine inclusion enhances the quality of life for everyone.

08 Rssundhsit and Pfisgs

Working systematically and effectively for a healthy city

Caring for everyone's health is a social achievement. Illness and physical and mental impairments create dependency. This dependency must not be exploited. Wasteful mismanagement of care due to flat-rate payments per case, profit-driven approaches and the extraction of profits runs counter to the requirement for the economical use of resources and needs-based healthcare. Handing over political responsibility to private-sector mechanisms in the healthcare system amounts to a capitulation in the face of the challenges posed by an ageing society, and must be reversed.

Healthcare, as a public service, should enable all people, regardless of their individual circumstances, to lead fulfilling, self-determined lives and participate in society. It must be organised in a participatory, democratic and transparent manner, based on scientific evidence, and independent of private-sector considerations.

Needs-based, cross-sectoral planning of interprofessional health and care provision must form the basis. It must not merely perpetuate the current distorted reality of care provision, but must be geared towards the needs of the population. A survey of health data relevant to planning, aligned with the city's socio-spatial structure, is a prerequisite. It helps to highlight gaps in care provision and to mobilise political pressure. District health structures and, above all, the Public Health Service must play an important role in this.

Social status does not merely determine access to healthcare. The division within society is mirrored within healthcare institutions.

We want to promote training in nursing and allied health professions just as much as we do medical studies. A person's social background should have as little influence as possible on their career path, and the shortage of skilled workers must be addressed. We want to improve training and working conditions in the health professions – to ensure greater professionalism, accountability and working conditions guaranteed by collective agreements.

Health is shaped by everyday life – through good housing conditions, education, community, a healthy upbringing and ageing, security and decent work. The political framework must be designed in such a way that individual social determinants do not put people at a disadvantage in terms of their health.

Instead of relying predominantly on the treatment of illnesses, the focus must be placed more strongly on prevention and, in particular, on environmental prevention – that is, on creating living conditions that promote and maintain good health.

Public Health Service, Prevention and Health Promotion

We want a strong public health service (ÖGD) as the third pillar of healthcare provision. This also requires initiatives to extend the ÖGD's remit under federal law.

It was only with the pandemic that the health authorities at state and district level returned to the political spotlight. They have a socially compensatory and subsidiary care mandate from birth to the end of life and are of fundamental importance to a functioning health system – by law, not only for the supervision of all healthcare facilities, but also for prevention, health support and care in specific life circumstances or in cases of mental illness, as well as for comprehensive and equitable health planning. Public health authorities should be given greater scope for diagnosis and treatment where established structures are insufficient or fail.

These comprehensive tasks cannot be fulfilled even remotely with the current levels of staffing and infrastructure, particularly as the ‘Pact for the Public Health Service’, through which public health authorities have been strengthened by federal funding since 2021, is due to expire in 2026 without replacement. We want a campaign to support the public health service that secures all statutory responsibilities with staff and infrastructure, and fills vacant posts.

We propose making the public health service more attractive to healthcare staff, including through a change to the admissions regulations for Berlin’s universities offering courses in psychology, medicine and social work.

In view of falling vaccination rates, we call for a step-up in vaccination campaigns. We want to increase the use of preventive health checks, dental check-ups and pre-school medical examinations, as well as vaccination advice and administration.

We remain committed to the objectives of the Fast Track Cities (FTC) initiative. We call for reliable funding for Berlin’s HIV/AIDS infrastructure. Prevention and treatment must be accessible to everyone – including refugees. Everyone should have access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and antiretroviral therapy. We are committed to consistently combating discrimination and stigmatisation. To better coordinate the fight against HIV, we are striving for an interdepartmental Berlin action plan in collaboration with the FTC network.

We place particular emphasis on the health consequences of homelessness and poverty: preventing poverty is a form of healthcare.

The existing structures for providing medical care to homeless people in Berlin have been established through a great deal of dedication and personal initiative – and rely heavily on donations and voluntary work. Medical practices and hospitals often lack the time and resources to provide these patients with adequate care. The right to access healthcare cannot currently be sufficiently guaranteed for homeless people and those without health insurance. Too many are falling through the net.

Our aim is to develop low-threshold services for the initial care of the specific needs of homeless people, for prevention, but also for the management of chronic conditions. We want to fund two care centres for homeless and housing-insecure people, staffed by specially trained doctors, nurses, therapists and social workers. These centres will be able to provide all care services that do not require hospitalisation. In addition to specialist medical and dental care, this includes counselling for mental health and substance use disorders, as well as support with personal hygiene, preparation for hospital admission, laboratory diagnostics and coordination with other services within the support system. The centres can safeguard and expand existing care provision. We also want to set up outreach healthcare programmes for the uninsured, the homeless and other vulnerable groups.

Marginalised groups face many barriers within the healthcare system – ranging from discrimination to a lack of accessibility. We are committed to training programmes to combat racist, sexist, anti-Semitic or ableist discrimination, to ensuring accessible surgery premises, and to establishing a guidance system for healthcare services.

Within the framework of the Berlin Health Services Act (GDG), we want to expand subsidiary and socially compensatory health promotion, addiction support and psychiatric care for children, young people and adults to include options for covering the costs of diagnosis and therapy, including at the expense of statutory health insurance, particularly in those regions and specialist groups where the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians is failing to fulfil its mandate to ensure access to care. We wish to encourage the joint state committee under Section 90a of the Social Code, Book V (SGB V) to exert influence on the licensing committee in this regard.

Outpatient care – transparent and accessible

Outpatient care in Germany is highly opaque and poorly coordinated. Patients – particularly those facing the greatest burdens – have great difficulty accessing

appropriate services. Primary care structures, in particular, are well-placed to provide care that is relevant to patients' everyday lives. However, an increasing number of commercialised services are also encroaching on this sector.

Traditional private and group practices (professional practice groups, or BAG for short) coexist alongside profit-oriented medical care centres (MVZ) and outpatient clinics. Until a ban on investor-run MVZs is introduced at federal level, we are relying on the enforcement of the Berlin Law on Chambers of Healthcare Professions, which currently still excludes non-medical management.

In many districts, there is a growing shortage of staff across almost all healthcare professions. Months-long waiting times, rushed appointments and a lack of continuity or home visits are reducing the quality of care. Staff are increasingly affected by the crisis in outpatient care. Their workload is constantly rising, leading to an increased risk of errors and illness, and a decline in job satisfaction.

As part of cross-sectoral health planning, we wish to expand the state committee under Section 90a of the Social Code, Book V (SGB V) in a meaningful way – for example, by including representatives from the districts and patients – and develop it into a binding decision-making and steering body. To this end, we call for a Bundesrat initiative to reform Section 90a of the Social Code, Book V (SGB V).

Health centres to combat under-provision and inadequate care

We wish to continue and expand the existing funding for non-profit, multi-professional health centres – for example, within the framework of care centres where not only GPs but also, depending on regional needs, other professions such as community health nurses, psychotherapists, social and addiction counsellors, and specialists in various fields can be found under one roof and from a single point of contact. We wish to continue and expand this funding. The shortage of GPs, paediatricians and specialists cannot be put off any longer. We want a special programme to establish

medical care centres (MVZ) under public or non-profit management, in order to tackle the problem head-on in the underserved parts of the city, particularly in eastern Berlin. A dedicated unit will be set up within the health administration to oversee the implementation of this special programme for establishing MVZs under public or non-profit management. The special programme includes the following measures:

To tackle the shortage of GPs, specialists and psychotherapists, we are bringing together, in accordance with Section 90a of the Social Code (SGB) V, we are bringing districts, hospital operators and the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians together to accelerate the establishment of municipal, state-owned and non-profit medical care centres (MVZ) providing primary care. A task force is being set up within the state-owned healthcare company Vivantes (or its subsidiary Vivantes MVZ) to examine the requirements and needs for the successful establishment of state-run medical care centres (MVZ) focused on primary care. A special fund for start-up financing from the state budget will be made available for such state-run medical care centres (MVZ) as well as for potential municipal medical care centres (MVZ). For non-public but non-profit organisations, we are advocating for joint start-up funding from the state and the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians.

Outlying areas in particular need more GPs and specialists. To this end, sufficient accessible and affordable practice premises must also be made available. State-owned properties with practice premises that are partly vacant or in need of refurbishment must be upgraded as a matter of priority so that these premises are once again available for outpatient care.

To secure the necessary premises, we are also examining the use and repurposing of vacant commercial spaces. State-owned housing companies will be required to take healthcare facilities into account in all their planning. We will make full use of the options available under building regulations to make the inclusion of practice premises mandatory as part of planning permission procedures. We support practice space exchanges, which already exist in Treptow-Köpenick and Marzahn-Hellersdorf, and are considering a cap on commercial rents for primary care facilities.

Strengthening Community Health Nursing

Community health nurses can play a vital role in local healthcare provision. They work within the local community, advising people on health issues, providing support for chronic conditions and helping to identify health risks at an early stage. Community health nurses can be a vital link to medical care, particularly for older people, those with complex support needs or those with limited access to the healthcare system. We therefore wish to expand pilot projects for community health nursing and integrate this approach more closely into municipal health centres and local care structures.

We very much welcome further training and degree programmes in this area and are committed to promoting them.

Ensuring care for people with ME/CFS, Long Covid and post-vaccination symptoms

We want to improve medical care for patients with ME/CFS, Long Covid and post-vaccination symptoms who cannot be transported: accessible options such as home visits or telemedicine must be provided. An awareness campaign, including infection control measures as a preventative measure, is necessary, as there has so far been a lack of recognition of the condition and a shortage of training within the healthcare system.

We want to support and expand the existing services providing specialised care for people with Long Covid, as current capacity does not meet demand.

We advocate for research funding that is commensurate with the severity, prevalence and research backlog surrounding ME/CFS, and which aims to ensure the availability of medicines.

Pharmacies and security of supply

The number of pharmacies in Berlin has fallen by 20 per cent over the past ten years, despite population growth. The supply of medicines is deteriorating: 97 per cent of GP practices report supply problems. In some districts, one in four pharmacies has closed. Die Linke calls for the preservation of local pharmacies and their greater integration into healthcare provision structures. We are committed to expanding training capacities for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, and, at federal level, to adjusting remuneration structures.

Hospitals for the people, not for profit

Several hospitals in Berlin are facing closure. Not because their relevance to healthcare provision has been assessed and the hospitals found to be dispensable, but because they appear economically unviable to their operators. Instead of systematic and needs-based management, individual providers decide – based on their economic indicators – which departments and which hospitals will expand or close.

Public accountability rather than the commercialisation of hospitals

The federal hospital reform is not leading to the promised de-commercialisation or reduction in bureaucracy. In concrete terms, the situation remains as follows: an oversupply is being created in profitable areas, whilst underfunded A&E departments are overwhelmed and departments for obstetrics, paediatrics or palliative care are either lacking or being closed. We hear from staff how the pressure to generate revenue is affecting care at the bedside: Early discharges into overburdened home care systems and to overburdened family carers, the selection of patients based on expected revenue, and overworked, inadequately trained and poorly supervised staff. Patients are rightly losing confidence that hospitals are acting in their best interests. We are therefore continuing to campaign at federal level for a genuine move away from the system of

flat-rate payment system (Diagnosis-Related Groups, or DRGs for short) and, at the state level, we are seeking to insulate bedside care from its effects.

There is a cumulative shortfall of hundreds of millions of euros between the identified investment needs of Berlin's hospitals and the funds actually available. Hospitals finance their infrastructure investments from the revenue generated by intended for the treatment of patients. The result: intense pressure on staff, dilapidated buildings and inadequate care. This cannot be allowed to happen. We want the state to fulfil its statutory obligation to fund hospitals to the extent required.

Expand the state's investment funding; align hospital planning with needs

We will not only reverse the cuts imposed by the current Senate, but also increase hospital investment to a level commensurate with needs. To this end, we are examining the use of new funding models and the expanded use of the Climate and Infrastructure Special Fund. We favour project-based funding rather than the allocation of lump-sum grants. We intend to tackle particularly urgent investments – such as those in the psychiatric wards at Hedwigshöhe Hospital and at Urbankrankenhaus – as quickly as possible. We want to preserve the Jewish Hospital Berlin as a fully-fledged hospital – ideally in cooperation with the public sector.

The forthcoming hospital reform at federal level gives the federal states responsibility for deciding which services are offered in which hospitals. Berlin must seize this opportunity to counter market failure with strong, democratic planning.

Municipalisation and democratisation of hospitals

Hospitals are part of essential public services and do not belong in the hands of profit-driven investors. We are firmly committed to

expanding our local authority-run hospitals, Charité and Vivantes. We aim for remunicipalisation where private operators shirk their responsibilities, close hospitals or departments, and undermine quality and staffing standards. The legal structure of municipal hospitals must ensure public transparency and democratic control – rather than the logic of limited companies and trade secrets. To this end, we want to restructure the publicly run Charité and Vivantes hospitals:

We are committed to organisational structures geared towards the common good with clear lines of responsibility: planning and management bodies in which staff, patient representatives, district representatives, the state and the public health service have a say in decision-making.

The aim is a hospital organisation that makes decisions based on scientific evidence, with care and in the interests of patients – not in the interests of balance sheets.

We are campaigning for hospitals to be better staffed with ward pharmacists.

Mental health in the city

Everyone should receive the psychotherapeutic and psychiatric care they need. In outpatient psychotherapy, there are long waiting times for a therapy place. If people with statutory health insurance cannot get an appointment with a psychotherapist registered with the health insurance fund, they can apply for reimbursement – though these claims are often rejected. The Left is campaigning to ensure that Berlin receives its proportionate share of the 2,400 missing health insurance contracts nationwide, as per the GBA study. In addition, a body should be established to oversee, provide information on and document cost-reimbursement claims, as well as to initiate new needs assessments. This could be achieved through a special licence.

Pilot projects, such as outreach therapy, are intended to provide care for older and immobile people close to their homes. Bureaucracy is to be reduced through low-threshold services, care networks and clearing houses

, whilst scientifically recognised methods are to be promoted in pilot projects.

We call for psychiatric care that is as non-coercive as possible, with lengths of stay determined by the degree of recovery, and for the reintegration of outsourced areas of therapy.

Social psychiatric care, including day clinics, outpatient services at psychiatric institutions and treatments equivalent to inpatient care, must be available across the board. Crisis intervention centres offering short-term admission, emergency chat services and outreach support should be established in every district. The Berlin Crisis Service should be provided with stable funding and expanded.

Psychosocial contact and counselling centres should be established in every district, offering individual and group counselling, workshops and support for participation in everyday life. Multi-professional teams with experience in psychiatry should provide everyday support and outreach services, and contribute to the networking of all participating institutions.

Loneliness is a societal problem with mental and physical consequences. The Left is calling for a loneliness officer in every borough.

Mental health should become an integral part of school education through lessons or project weeks, in order to educate children and young people about mental health conditions, care and forms of therapy, to promote resilience and to reduce stigma.

The Left is campaigning for clinics to provide more places for psychotherapists undergoing further training in accordance with the PsychThApprO regulations. Psychotherapists in training should receive an appropriate training allowance.

Housing, social inclusion and employment should be safeguarded through the expansion of supported housing and individual psychiatric support. Client-centred areas of work and activity, such as low-threshold leisure activities and roles in, for example, sheltered workshops or sustainable farms, should be promoted.

Mental health issues should be incorporated into the Workplace Regulations; regular checks should be carried out; and health promotion should be implemented on a mandatory basis. Employers should be held more accountable, and employees should be involved in measures aimed at improvement.

Services for traumatised people should be promoted, specialist staff should receive trauma-specific further training, and multilingual care structures should be expanded.

We are determined to improve the care provided to people with psychosis – not least by ensuring that social and psychiatric services are adequately resourced and well-coordinated.

Gender-sensitive research and care should be promoted, specialised services for trans*, inter* and non-binary people expanded, and gender equality ensured in diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

The physical and staffing conditions at the forensic hospital must be improved as a matter of urgency. We want to move forward with the construction of an extension as soon as possible. In the long term, we want to create alternatives to forensic detention.

Decent work in all healthcare professions

Work in the healthcare sector is characterised by staff shortages, compressed working hours and high levels of physical and mental strain, whilst pay and social recognition remain inadequate. The pursuit of profit maximisation and cost-cutting pressures are further worsening conditions, with responsibility being spread too thinly. This increases the likelihood of errors and puts patients at risk.

To make healthcare professions more attractive, we support the fight for better salaries, particularly for those starting out in the profession, as well as for binding standards on staffing ratios in healthcare facilities. We reject outsourcing, which leads to a two-tier wage system,

and we are campaigning for the reintegration of outsourced areas, such as Charité Facility Management and the subsidiaries of Vivantes. We will support hospital operators in implementing good working and collective agreement conditions through a fund open to all providers that promotes 'Good Work'.

Employees' rights must be taught as early as during vocational training. For skilled workers from abroad, we want to create integration programmes and an advisory portal on legal issues. Precarious employment relationships, such as those of international care workers in private households, must be subject to a binding legal framework.

The Nursing Staff Regulation 2.0 (PPR 2.0) is an important step. We are therefore campaigning for binding staffing levels in all areas where patients receive care. Our aim is measurably better nursing care, safe working conditions and the greatest possible transparency for patients.

Pilot degree programmes in physiotherapy and occupational therapy must be safeguarded and supported at universities.

One-to-one care for pregnant women and those giving birth – including in the event of miscarriage or termination – should be made possible through improved staffing ratios rather than pay cuts.

With regard to emergency care, we want to see violence prevention, first-aid training in schools and public awareness campaigns to relieve the burden on the ambulance service. In view of the looming crisis in healthcare provision, we support trade union initiatives.

Healthcare professions must also become more attractive to young people. Training conditions should be improved, further training opportunities expanded and academic prospects strengthened.

Die Linke Berlin supports the expansion of the Berlin Education Campus for Healthcare Professions (BBG) on the site of the former Wenckebach Clinic.

We need better monitoring of working conditions, particularly in outpatient care, and improvements for those employed in this sector, including fair pay and collective agreements in areas previously unregulated, as well as better conditions in therapy practices and outpatient care.

Healthcare workers are increasingly exposed to violence. Violence in the healthcare sector affects us all. We therefore want to expand prevention programmes and safety measures for healthcare facilities. At the same time, there needs to be greater public awareness of violence against healthcare workers.

A safe working environment is essential for good medical care.

Making care affordable – easing the burden on relatives

The steadily rising co-payments for residential care are placing an increasing burden on residents of care homes. In the outpatient sector, too, care allowances and in-kind benefit budgets are covering fewer and fewer services. This leads to family carers being overburdened and to those in need of care being underserved. Support services such as short-term and day care places are in short supply in many places. A fundamental shift in care policy is therefore needed.

We want the state to fulfil its responsibility for funding the investment costs in fully residential care homes. We are therefore campaigning for the introduction of a care housing allowance that provides immediate relief for care home residents. Furthermore, we aim to significantly increase the proportion of publicly funded care homes.

The State of Berlin should also campaign in the Bundesrat to ensure that personal contributions are reduced nationwide. In the long term, we are campaigning at federal level for a comprehensive care insurance scheme based on solidarity, which will ease the burden on those in need of care and their relatives.

We will strengthen the opportunities for care home and residents' committees to have a say and ensure that they have the necessary resources at their disposal.

As independent advice and referral centres, the care support centres play a key role in navigating the complex system of care, social and health services. We therefore intend to further expand these care support centres. In addition, we aim to establish a care helpline modelled on the Hamburg scheme, which will provide advice and referral services, particularly at night and at weekends when established services are unavailable.

To better support family carers, we are expanding short-term care and closing gaps in day care provision. Die Linke Berlin is consistently implementing the 'State Care Plan 2025' and is driving forward binding state care structure planning at both state and district levels. For us, the key priorities are neighbourhood-based, needs-based care services, local networks and providing relief for family carers. We are drawing on the results of pilot projects, such as the 'Care Round Table' in Treptow-Köpenick, to develop district-level care planning structures across the city.

Health and Wellbeing

Women's health, bodily autonomy and gender-sensitive medicine

The health of women and FLINTA* individuals is still not adequately addressed in medicine, research and healthcare provision. A structural imbalance is also evident in the allocation of research funding, as women's health issues remain significantly underfunded.

We are therefore committed to gender-sensitive medicine that expands research into conditions such as endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome and lipoedema, makes gender-specific studies mandatory for drug approvals, and embeds this knowledge in teaching, training and clinical practice. To improve care, we want to strengthen the Berlin Endometriosis Centre and develop a

pilot project that systematically incorporates multimodal pain management into the treatment of those affected. To promote women's health, an annual symposium is to be organised in Berlin.

To counteract structural misogyny, the content of initial, continuing and further training programmes across all medical professions must be modernised and supplemented with compulsory awareness-raising sessions, to be held in both hospitals and GP practices. Furthermore, first-aid courses should, in future, place greater emphasis on teaching and practising how to administer life-saving measures to women and FLINTA* individuals.

Self-determination over one's own body is a fundamental right. We are therefore campaigning at federal level for the repeal of Section 218 of the German Criminal Code (StGB) and will table a corresponding legislative initiative in the Bundesrat to this end. We advocate the abolition of the compulsory counselling requirement and the three-day waiting period for terminations of pregnancy. Terminations of pregnancy should be available in all public hospitals with gynaecological departments, and the costs must be covered by health insurance funds. In addition, we call for easier and self-determined access to sterilisation procedures.

Medical care following sexual violence must also be improved. Anonymous and confidential forensic evidence collection must be available throughout Berlin, on a decentralised basis and around the clock.

Menstruation must not be a taboo subject. We are committed to destigmatising menstruation and to effectively tackling period poverty. To this end, period products should be available free of charge in all public facilities.

We are committed to ensuring that addiction-accepting support services are created for women with substance use disorders and that homeless women are given access to safe and suitable accommodation.

Improving healthcare for trans* people

Trans* people often face significant barriers within the healthcare system. Long waiting times, bureaucratic procedures and a lack of specialised services make it difficult to access necessary medical care.

We therefore aim to improve medical care for trans* people in Berlin and strengthen specialised services. We therefore call for more therapy places with qualified psychotherapists, easier access to hormone therapy, and straightforward coverage of the costs of gender-affirming procedures by health insurance providers.

Trans-specific health literacy should be more firmly embedded in the training of medical staff in order to reduce discrimination and improve the quality of care.

Climate and Health

The climate crisis has a direct impact on health. Among other things, it leads to an increase in heat-related illnesses, respiratory diseases caused by air pollution, and the spread of new infectious diseases. Vulnerable groups such as children, older people and those in precarious housing and working conditions, as well as people who are barely able to protect themselves from these stresses, are particularly affected. To tackle heatwaves effectively, coordinated heat action plans are needed – at regional and district level, as well as for institutions such as hospitals and care homes.

Initiatives are needed to reduce resource consumption within the healthcare system without compromising the quality of care. The aim is a healthcare system that combines security of care with environmental and economic sustainability. We are committed to the energy-efficient refurbishment and climate-neutral conversion of hospitals, care homes and health centres, and aim to reduce the healthcare sector's carbon footprint.

Digitalisation in the health and care sector

Patients' health data is highly sought after and is increasingly becoming a commodity. At the same time, digital applications are opening up new opportunities for diagnosis, care and treatment. The Left is committed to ensuring that the potential for healthcare provision and health planning is utilised whilst at the same time safeguarding personal privacy. Hospital information systems must be held to the standard of ensuring that data is secure from unauthorised access and enables the exchange of patient data between institutions for the purposes of care provision.

Hospitals, doctors' surgeries, care homes and public health authorities should be better networked with one another, for example in the fight against infectious diseases or for monitoring drinking water quality. To enable all stakeholders to see how modern digital solutions work, venues should be established in Berlin where such technology can be tested. Digitalisation must become an integral part of training in all healthcare professions.

Drug policy

We advocate a fundamentally different approach to drugs policy. We will make full use of all available scope to implement a responsible drugs policy in Berlin that does not criminalise drug use or stigmatise users, but instead seeks to reduce the health and social risks faced by those who use drugs.

At national level, we will campaign for a far-reaching reform of the Narcotics Act, which will create legal channels for consumers to obtain substances that were previously illegal.

These supply channels must not be profit-driven and must be accompanied by education, the protection of young people and prevention.

The expansion of drug consumption rooms, which has been successfully implemented in Berlin, not only ensures greater health protection for

users, but also relieves the pressure on areas affected by drug use. In particular, crack use in public spaces poses a challenge for local residents, park users and business owners. In order to address this phenomenon effectively, we advocate innovative approaches to low-threshold drug support, such as designated inhalation rooms for crack use modelled on the Swiss system. The strict prosecution of small-scale drug dealing contributes to the criminalisation of users and therefore does more harm than good. We will change this.

We will consolidate and expand services for addiction prevention and education, as well as addiction and drug support, in order to promote the social inclusion of people with addiction disorders. We will expand needs-based outpatient therapy services. Psychosocial and socio-educational support services for people with addictions must be further developed, and low-threshold access to substitution treatment must be promoted.

Die Linke Berlin is committed to simplifying the licensing procedures for cannabis-growing associations in the city. The current legal framework is extremely complex and poses a major challenge for these voluntary associations; the administrative burden is extremely difficult to reconcile with the maximum membership limit of 500 per association. The fact that the shared consumption of cannabis is prohibited within a cannabis-growing association is absurd, and this ban must be abolished. Community life within cannabis-growing associations must be strengthened, not hindered. We are committed to ensuring that the State of Berlin provides advisory services for associations in the process of being established.

The drug-checking project is a model of success in terms of protecting users' health and ensuring transparency regarding the substances in circulation. We are therefore campaigning for the expansion of the currently insufficient capacity, for a mobile drug-checking service, and for the scheme to be extended to drug consumption rooms as well. We want drug checking for everyone!

A de-stigmatising policy saves lives. A corresponding paradigm shift is therefore a top priority. Successful, progressive approaches have been developed in Berlin to this end, which we will revive and continue. Drug use is a reality of society. Die Linke therefore calls for an evidence-based and humane drugs policy.

Militarisation of the healthcare system

In Berlin, the healthcare system is being made fit for war. Healthcare workers are being treated as human resources. Under the framework plan for civil defence in hospitals, the restructuring of Berlin's healthcare system according to military standards is already being driven forward. In the event of an alliance or defence scenario, the provision of care for the military is to take precedence over that for the people of Berlin.

The Left calls for healthcare provision to be organised according to social and needs-based criteria, not according to the logic of war. We oppose the participation of Berlin's healthcare facilities in war-preparedness exercises. The healthcare professions must serve to preserve peace, not to prepare for war.

09 Policy on older people

A good life in old age

As a city for its people, Berlin must also be a home for the nearly one million residents aged over 60. However, the current policies of the CDU/SPD Senate are taking the city further and further away from this goal. There is a shortage of housing for everyone – but for older people in particular, there is a lack of accessible and, at the same time, affordable housing. More and more older people are at risk of losing their homes with no alternative due to high rent and heating costs. Adequate medical care is now only available to a limited extent in some parts of the city, and journeys to the doctor are becoming more expensive and taking longer. There is a lack of seating in public spaces, and grocery shops within walking distance are closing down. S-Bahn trains, buses and trams are cancelled or stuck in traffic jams. Care services are in short supply. More and more older people are falling into poverty, becoming cut off from social life and growing lonely.

Effectively tackling poverty in old age

Low wages and disruptions to working lives, coupled with skyrocketing rents and persistently high inflation, mean that many older Berliners, particularly women, are affected by poverty – and their numbers are growing. The planned cuts to basic income support will only exacerbate this trend. We will not accept this. At the federal level, Die Linke is therefore continuing to campaign for an increase in pension levels to safeguard living standards, for minimum pensions that protect against poverty, and for a minimum wage that secures pension entitlements. At state and district level, we want to establish independent measures to mitigate the effects of poverty in old age and ensure a good quality of life. For us, this includes expanding a comprehensive, legally binding social infrastructure comprising neighbourhood centres, advice centres, local clubs, senior citizens' meeting places, mobility services, etc., across all boroughs

in line with needs, including in new residential areas. The necessary investment funds must be made available for this.

Enabling social participation: a Social Care Infrastructure Act for Berlin

To this end, but also to ensure that individual rights in the field of care for the elderly can finally be upheld across all districts, regardless of an individual's financial circumstances, Die Linke has been campaigning for years for the creation of a Structural Act on Care for the Elderly to implement Section 71 of SGB XII at state level. Die Linke will make this Act a political priority, immediately initiate a legislative process based on the draft drawn up by the Berlin State Senior Citizens' Advisory Council in 2023, and provide all necessary financial resources in line with needs. We call for binding criteria and regulations for social infrastructure, thereby ensuring more comparable living conditions for older Berliners across all districts.

Strengthening political participation: volunteering and co-determination

We want to strengthen the legal status of senior citizens' representative bodies and ensure this is implemented uniformly across all boroughs. This includes the right to submit motions and speak in all borough senior citizens' councils (BVVs), as well as the provision of adequate resources. To this end, we will finally amend the Senior Citizens' Participation Act. To increase voter turnout, we want to hold these elections alongside those for the House of Representatives. We will remove any conflicting provisions between the Senior Citizens' Participation Act and the District Administration Act that act as obstacles. We aim to specifically recruit more older people with a migrant background to undertake voluntary work within senior citizens' representative bodies.

Expanding advisory services

For Die Linke, it is a priority to roll out the 'Berlin Home Visits' scheme across all neighbourhoods in Berlin, thereby enabling us to

interested older people and, at the same time, identify care needs. We want to further develop the project so that the particularly sensitive phase of transitioning into retirement is also better supported. To this end, we will increase funding and recruit more qualified staff, e.g. by offering better pay. We also want to coordinate these services with other outreach programmes, in particular with the district social commissions. We intend to raise awareness of these commissions through increased public relations work, and we will also seek to grant them greater powers and examine the possibility of providing them with better resources. Furthermore, we want to support the expansion of multilingual services. In the long term, our aim is to offer advice for older people from a single point of contact and to provide more outreach-based services.

Enabling reliable communication – digital and analogue

For us, inclusion means that no one must be left behind, not even those who have not yet found a way to access digital communication. We are therefore committed to ensuring that there are reliable and sufficient options available even for people who cannot or do not wish to use digital media, for example, to deal with their administrative matters via other channels: by visiting in person, by telephone or in writing, or through the establishment of assistants in citizens' advice bureaux. Furthermore, we wish to continue promoting targeted services for older people that enable them to use digital services and/or support them in doing so.

No age discrimination

The Left fights against all forms of age discrimination. At the federal level, we are campaigning for a corresponding amendment to the Basic Law. For us, this also means taking a stand against discrimination against young people. We support intergenerational projects, for example in the design of public spaces.

Safety on the roads

We are committed to ensuring that public spaces and public transport are suitable for older people. We also want more traffic lights on busy roads and traffic light timings that allow for safe, slow Enable people to cross the road. There must be no bus stops in the city without a shelter and seating.

Older people and families with children need a strategy to tackle the dangerous parking of hire e-bikes and scooters on pavements, including appropriate penalties.

Local amenities and housing suitable for older people

Berlin needs neighbourhoods with short distances and accessible infrastructure. We advocate the '15-minute city' concept: everyday facilities and services must be within walking distance, even for older people. With this in mind, we are campaigning against the further reduction of local amenities. As well as sufficient seating in public spaces, there is also a need for a robust infrastructure with free public toilets. Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring that people can still afford their homes as they get older, that no one loses their home, and that older people can spend their twilight years with dignity in their familiar surroundings. We support initiatives that help young and older people realise their wish to live together.

Health and Care

General practitioners must be better remunerated for home visits to ensure that Berliners in need of care also receive good healthcare in their own homes. The Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians must ensure that healthcare for older people improves. This includes making it mandatory for doctors' surgeries to be reachable by telephone.

We want a programme for the remunicipalisation of care facilities. To achieve this, and to provide urgently needed places for day

and short-term care, we are calling for public investment in the care infrastructure. Social services departments must be provided with sufficient staff and funding to meet demand, so that applications for care assistance can be processed more quickly. It is essential to introduce a system of advance authorisation upon application.

Heat protection

In response to increasing heat stress, we call for more specialised services for older people. All local community centres should be equipped to serve as cooling centres during heatwaves. Residential and care homes for older people must also be made heat-resistant. We call for drinking water dispensers to be installed throughout all public buildings. In addition, more drinking fountains are needed in public spaces. Morning appointments with doctors and at local authority offices make unavoidable journeys easier. In particular, special outreach services provided by neighbourhood support groups must be expanded for older Berliners living alone.

10 Education

Good education for all: our goal is educational equity

Schools cannot remain as they are: they perpetuate social inequality, are outdated, under-resourced and place a strain on pupils, staff and families alike. Educational institutions are expected to take on ever more responsibilities in our complex society, yet they have been – and continue to be – left to cope on their own far too often.

At the same time, many schools are doing excellent and innovative work under difficult conditions. We want to value and strengthen these experiences in order to finally make Berlin's schools places of educational equity. The role of schools is the comprehensive personal development of each and every pupil. The Left firmly opposes reducing this to the mere teaching of basic skills. Schools, as places of life and learning, lay the foundations for participation in a democratic, inclusive and solidarity-based society and for a self-determined life. It is here that pupils practise living together peacefully in a diverse society. Schools should be places of genuine emancipation, where young people are not governed by the logic of pure profit maximisation and competition, but can increasingly shape their everyday school life in a self-determined way. Education should empower them to understand society critically and to bring about change through solidarity. We want to encourage teachers to apply emancipatory and participatory educational approaches. In schools, too, our principle is: each according to their own abilities, each according to their own needs.

We will continue to fight to ensure that access to high-quality education does not depend on parents' financial circumstances or the neighbourhood in which they live, and that Berlin's schools can cater to the real-life circumstances of all their pupils. We will not leave any child behind!

Free of charge and a sound investment

The Left stands firmly behind the principle of free education from nursery to university. We not only want to retain the free pupil travel pass for all pupils in Berlin; we also want to extend the fee-free eFöB (supplementary support and care, formerly: after-school care) to Year 4, as well as free learning materials and free school lunches to lower and upper secondary school, because education is a responsibility for society as a whole and part of public services. Free access is essential, particularly in a city like Berlin, where one in four children grows up in poverty. We also want to continue to waive the means test for access to eFöB.

A school for everyone: more community schools for Berlin!

Berlin's comprehensive schools succeed in decoupling pupils' academic progress from their social background. In these schools, as in many other countries, pupils learn together from their first day at school right through to graduation, without having to worry about securing a place at their preferred secondary school. We therefore want to reignite the debate on school structure with greater vigour, with the medium-term aim of moving beyond the segregated school system. We will significantly expand the number of Berlin community schools as the schools of the future. In doing so, the Senate must take on a more proactive steering role and oblige the boroughs to establish at least two new community schools each by 2031. We intend to build new schools primarily as comprehensive schools and prioritise them within the Berlin School Construction Programme (BSO). However, binding procedures with clear responsibilities should also support and accelerate mergers and conversions. In particular, we encourage grammar schools to convert to comprehensive schools and will create the necessary structural conditions.

In addition, we intend to establish minimum quality standards, including the right to have their own upper secondary section and to organise classes by ability in the primary and lower secondary stages. If existing schools decide to become community schools, they must receive funding for external

process support as well as temporary additional staffing. In terms of funding from the Berlin school budget, they must not be worse off than before. The expansion of comprehensive schools is to be scientifically monitored through a longitudinal study covering Years 1 to 13.

Good work in schools as places of work and learning

Teachers in Berlin's schools do a great job every day – despite increasingly poor working conditions. It is not a return to civil service status, but solely the Senate's accounting tricks that have reduced the teacher shortage in recent years, at the expense of those who have been keeping the system running for years. We reject this approach. Instead, the actual staffing requirements must be clearly identified, training capacities increased and the workload of existing staff sustainably reduced – in the long term, including through smaller class sizes. We want to regulate this objective and the path towards it through collective agreements or school legislation.

We also aim for a fairer distribution of qualified teachers – taking subject specialisms into account – across districts, school types and individual schools, in order to counteract the current imbalance and the severe shortage at certain schools.

In particular, when it comes to recruiting fully qualified teachers, we will exercise greater control; we intend to abolish the 'casting' process in its current form and replace it with a centralised application process in which applicants specify their preferred schools.

Every year, teachers in Berlin work two million hours of unpaid overtime. We therefore support the trade unions' call for mandatory working time recording and intend to implement this as quickly as possible, building on a pilot project at district level. Furthermore, we wish to agree arrangements with the staff representatives to reduce overtime. A 10 per cent reserve of supply teachers currently seems unrealistic given the severe shortage of teachers. Our aim remains to train sufficient teachers so that this objective can be achieved as quickly as possible. Similarly, we also wish to establish a substitute teacher reserve for all-day schooling. We intend to reverse the temporary suspension of 'Profil-bedarf II' and the increased teaching load for trainee teachers

– together amounting to a cut of 470 full-time posts – and reintroduce the compensation, abolished by the Black-Red coalition, for teachers who do not wish to become permanent civil servants.

The Left is committed to improving the work-life balance between professional work and care responsibilities. Through a pilot project on job-sharing for headteachers, we aim to enable team-based leadership and allocate these roles with more than 100 per cent of a full-time post, thereby facilitating, amongst other things, time for consultation. For early years educators, we want to open up new career paths, for example through additional specialist roles to provide professional guidance to colleagues in all-day care settings, or by creating a further qualification to become a specialist educator in media education. We want to strengthen the role of coordinating early years teachers and firmly establish them as managerial staff within the Schools Act.

We aim to simplify the recognition of teaching qualifications obtained abroad, in particular by allowing recruitment based on just one subject taught in Berlin schools, regardless of whether it is a subject in short supply or not. Furthermore, we want to ensure better support during the adaptation course or studies and lower the language requirements, at least in selected school subjects to C1, as is the case in other federal states. We want to make the recognition of professional experience more flexible.

Good work requires strong employee representation. That is why we want to retain the current staff representation structure in the school sector.

Moving schools forward as a team!

There is a need for comprehensive improvements in the allocation of teaching assistants, support staff and school assistants, who must become part of the basic allocation. At the same time, we are striving for better staffing levels for administrative managers and IT administrators; every school needs one full-time post each, with large and very large schools requiring correspondingly more. In addition to school caretakers

cleaning staff – who, as part of the remunicipalisation of school cleaning services, will in future be employed in the public sector again – must also become an integral part of the school communities.

Furthermore, we aim to establish a flexible staffing budget for multi-professional teams, enabling schools to take responsibility for permanently appointing additional staff (e.g. school health professionals, occupational therapists, learning therapists, speech and language therapists, etc.) in line with their specific needs. To this end, they will receive additional funding, scaled according to school size, school specialisation and school type. Both this flexible staffing budget and the above-mentioned improvements to staffing levels are to be introduced first in schools with a high degree of specialisation and gradually extended to all schools in Berlin. We wish to retain the option of temporarily converting unfilled teaching posts into other professional roles, with the possibility of reverting them back, whilst the ongoing shortage of teachers persists. However, this does not replace the permanent expansion of multi-professional teaching teams that we are striving for.

A multi-professional approach thrives on cooperation between equals. This requires structures, the necessary mindset and fixed times for consultation and exchange. All professions working directly with pupils therefore require team meetings as a fixed part of their working hours, in addition to the existing regulations on indirect educational work. They also require workspaces, clear staffing structures and must be represented on school committees.

Quality of education over quantity

The shortage of teachers will continue to pose challenges for Berlin in the coming years. We are therefore striving for a paradigm shift: away from the quantity of teaching hours and towards the quality of education. With significantly fewer than 100 per cent of teaching staff, it is not possible to cover 100 per cent of the workload. The current dogmatic prioritisation of the timetable over allocations for inclusion and language support means that the teacher

shortage is borne by the pupils who are most in need of individual support. We believe this is wrong and therefore want to enshrine the priority of language and individual support in the allocation guidelines. We want a considered prioritisation of the timetable and teaching content, rather than uncontrolled cancellations or stopgap supply teaching. In the event of a persistent shortage of teachers, schools must be given the option to temporarily and selectively reduce their timetables. To shape this paradigm shift in collaboration with pupils, educators and parents, we will organise suitable participation formats, for example in the form of round-table discussions. The aim is to work together to find effective solutions for addressing the shortage that are geared towards educational equity, whilst offering schools guidance and support. Furthermore, we want to streamline the sometimes outdated and overloaded curricula and bring both curricula and teaching formats up to date.

Special schools need special solutions

We are fighting to ensure that every child has access to high-quality education. We clearly recognise that the Berlin education system structurally disadvantages many children and young people. To ensure that educational equity does not become an empty phrase, we want to provide the strongest support to those schools facing the greatest challenges. They continue to need additional resources. We will continue the supplementary budget for Berlin's school budget (formerly the 'Bonus Programme') and ensure that funds from the federal and state 'Startchancenprogramm' reach the areas where they are most urgently needed quickly, precisely and with as little red tape as possible. Improvements in the allocation of resources should prioritise schools facing particular challenges. In the all-day schooling sector, we intend to allocate a higher proportion of teaching hours to indirect educational work than in other schools.

In addition, we intend to establish the 'Schools of the Future' pilot scheme, in which schools characterised by a very high degree of school-type specialisation can participate on a voluntary basis. It is designed to enable schools, based on the needs and learning interests of their pupils,

, to interpret the curricula more flexibly and to integrate elements of progressive education more extensively into their work.

Furthermore, the pilot schools are to receive additional support and resources for school development for a fixed period, as well as posts for teachers and other educational professionals beyond the scope of existing support programmes. The project is to be subject to academic monitoring.

We consider Berlin's school categorisation system to be, in principle, a good management tool, but we wish to review it for unintended side-effects and optimise it. We intend to further develop school inspections – for all schools, not just those identified by the relevant school supervisory authority as having a particular need for development. In doing so, we aim to emphasise the importance of indicators such as democratic school development, inclusion and the existence of anti-discrimination and complaints mechanisms.

Strengthening the mental health of children and young people

To strengthen psychosocial support for children and young people, district-level framework strategies are needed, as well as cross-disciplinary networking at district and state level across the sectors of education, youth and health. In line with the state programme for school social work, we also intend to establish a state programme for psychology in schools, thereby providing one psychologist for every 800 pupils. These psychologists are to serve as easily accessible points of contact for pupils'

, guidance teachers and school projects. However, all other educational professionals working in schools must also be made aware of issues relating to the mental health of children and young people and supported in their professional practice through practice-oriented further training. Pupils themselves must also be made aware of their own needs. In particular, we want to strengthen their self-regulation skills. This requires embedding the topic of mental health within school curricula and expanding peer-to-peer programmes. We want to facilitate the establishment of a school outreach team, modelled on the Neukölln initiative, in all Berlin boroughs.

State Programme for School Social Work

Under the regional programme, every school, including upper secondary schools, should now have at least one school social worker post. We intend to

we want to implement this across the board at last, including in newly established schools. Looking ahead, we are aiming for a ratio of one school social worker to every 150 pupils. Furthermore, we want to further develop the state programme and, in consultation with the funding bodies, establish binding quality standards for the various services offered in the field of school social work. In particular, we want to adjust the overhead costs in the state programme to reflect actual costs and establish a mechanism for regular updates. We are also examining the creation of a local authority body to enable public-sector employment within the framework of the state programme, whilst safeguarding the independence of our colleagues.

Consistently implementing inclusion

Every child has the right to attend an inclusive school and to learn alongside other children. The Left is firmly committed to implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Left therefore vehemently opposes the expansion and construction of new special educational support centres. Instead, we will launch a state-level strategy for school inclusion that looks beyond the current legislative term and sets out how, in the medium term, inclusive schooling close to home can be reliably guaranteed for all children. We intend to underpin this strategy – which also includes ensuring that buildings are as accessible as possible across the board – with binding targets and timelines, and to allocate the necessary investment funds in the state's financial planning. As part of a pilot project, we are exploring the possibility of opening a special educational needs centre to all pupils.

In the short term, we intend to significantly expand the inclusive specialist schools as a bridging solution and establish the planned 36 inclusive specialist schools. To this end, the necessary

investment funds must be made available. The focus here should be on expanding places for pupils with intellectual disabilities and autism, as we cannot accept a situation where several thousand children and young people in Berlin receive only limited schooling or none at all. The expansion of temporary small classes can help in this regard. However, it is important to us that these arrangements are temporary, thereby ensuring the prospect of inclusive schooling, which must always be guaranteed. Secondly, we want to establish binding staffing standards for schools practising inclusive education: the allocation of teaching hours for (language) support and inclusion must be based on actual needs, without any caps. These hours must not be used for supply teaching. We will ensure that the support reaches the pupils for whom it is intended. Furthermore, schools must actually be allocated 100 per cent of their hours for inclusion. A district-level adjustment reserve is a sensible additional measure.

We will replace the current ‘scattergun’ approach to the allocation of teaching hours for Special Educational Needs Group I in primary schools with a combination of reliable basic funding and an additional allocation based on the school’s actual needs, in line with Hamburg standards. We reject the application of reliable basic funding to secondary schools. Even grammar schools – a type of school where, to date, not even one per cent of pupils have special educational needs – must work more inclusively and open their doors to children and young people requiring support.

We want pupils, for example those with special educational needs, to be able to sit the BBR, eBBR or MSA examinations. We want to extend the regulations on compensating for disadvantages. We want to remove the cap on the number of hours for school inclusion support.

The rights and application procedures relating to inclusion in schools are so complex that schools and many parents find it difficult to keep track of them. We want to ensure greater clarity in this area.

At the School Psychology and Inclusive Education Counselling and Support Centres (SIBUZ), we will

in the field of inclusive education. Transport must be guaranteed for pupils who, due to a disability, are unable to reach their school independently. This includes journeys to the early and late modules of the eFöB, as well as to extracurricular activities (e.g. work experience placements, excursions) and holiday schools. We intend to enshrine a legal entitlement to this in law. Transport to and from swimming lessons within a reasonable time must also be guaranteed for all pupils. The costs of transport to and from school and for swimming buses must be reimbursed to the districts by the state.

Enabling alternative educational pathways

The Left stands for inclusion. At the same time, it recognises that individual pupils, for example in certain crisis situations, may require a different learning environment for a limited period. Places in alternative educational programmes are often unavailable or only available after a long waiting period. We therefore want to create more such places. Districts must not be financially penalised for providing such places.

Shaping successful transitions

Transitions represent a sensitive phase in the educational journey of children and young people, associated with many fears and uncertainties, but also – in the face of a shortage of school places – with enormous pressure to perform, stress and a great deal of frustration. When deciding which type of school to recommend for a child from lower secondary level onwards, we want not only to take into account their performance in maths, German and English, but also to recognise pupils' strengths more comprehensively and give greater weight to the educational assessment provided by class conferences. We will maintain the abolition of the probationary year and the practice of 'downgrading' pupils to a lower school. We want to abolish trial lessons. In the transition process

to secondary school, we wish to retain the quota for cases of hardship and siblings, and increase the proportion of places allocated by lottery. For places allocated on the basis of selection criteria

, we want to give greater consideration to socio-spatial cooperation. We also want to abolish repeating a year at grammar schools, whilst continuing to allow pupils to remain in the same year voluntarily where this makes educational sense. We want to strengthen and expand educational networks, both for the transition from nursery to primary school and for the transition from primary to secondary school. All community schools and integrated secondary schools should have their own upper secondary section, within a network where appropriate. In addition to the medium- medium- and long-term goal of creating more comprehensive schools, Die Linke is also committed to a six-year primary school system in Berlin with fixed catchment areas, in order to counteract increasing segregation in the education sector.

Against bullying and discrimination

Die Linke is firmly committed to combating racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, queerphobia, ableism, discrimination on the basis of socio-economic status, bullying and violence in Berlin's schools. This requires a coordinated and effective anti-discrimination framework. At its heart is an independent complaints office, linked to the State Anti-Discrimination Agency. It is intended to serve as a low-threshold advice and support centre for pupils and parents and, in addition to dealing with cases of discrimination under the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act (LADG), be able to intervene in conflicts arising from the Schools Act, for example in the area of inclusion. To this end, it must be granted the necessary rights of access to files and powers of intervention. In the event that the new complaints body for school staff, established under Section 13 of the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), fails to take action, these staff members should also be able to turn to the independent complaints body. Furthermore, we wish to strengthen the role and influence of the anti-discrimination and anti-bullying officer within the education administration. We envisage their remit primarily in the area of discrimination-sensitive organisational development within the education administration's sphere of responsibility. This includes not only the revision of regulations but also the establishment of anti-discrimination and complaints structures at individual school level. At district level, the anti-discrimination officer will be supported by district-level bodies which will provide them with

are subject to these guidelines and act as points of contact for schools, but do not offer advice on individual cases. We want to safeguard and consolidate extracurricular educational and empowerment programmes in the areas of anti-discrimination, anti-racist and inclusion-sensitive education, the prevention of anti-Semitism, queer education, raising awareness of poverty, and the prevention of bullying and violence – programmes which support Berlin's schools through project work, professional development and school development.

Unlocking the treasure: promoting multilingualism

We regard multilingualism as a valuable skill and wish to promote it. We will continue to expand mother-tongue teaching in Berlin's schools

in line with demand, particularly in secondary schools. We plan to expand the provision of the Staatliche Europa-Schule to include further locations and languages, especially in the eastern part of the city. We also intend to examine the possibility of establishing a German-Arabic or German-Kurdish stream within schools.

Furthermore, we aim to expand the list of foreign languages available for study in Berlin to include, amongst others, Arabic and Kurdish. We intend to streamline the process of recognising pupils' existing foreign language skills.

The right to education applies to everyone

Every child has the right to a school education, regardless of their background – from the moment they arrive in Berlin. We want to realise this right, amongst other things, by freeing up premises in schools that are currently used for non-educational purposes, thereby creating space for more welcome classes, but also by slightly increasing class sizes in welcome classes on a temporary basis if necessary. Welcome classes provide a safe space for new arrivals. From the very start, there must be contact with peers in mainstream classes, as well as the prospect of a timely transition. To this end, transition management in the boroughs must be improved. In particular, we want to make the transition to lower secondary education less discriminatory and simpler by increasing the proportion of places allocated by lottery. We

We firmly reject segregated schooling in shared accommodation, just as we reject fixed age limits for attendance at welcome classes.

Schools against the far right!

The shift to the right in society in recent years also poses major challenges for school communities. We want to support schools in addressing these challenges: through adequately funded prevention and empowerment programmes for pupils, through professional development for teaching staff, through guidelines on dealing with the far right in schools, and through a very clear commitment to a values-based educational mission rooted in

Section 1 of the Education Act: It is the duty of schools and teaching staff to actively oppose anti-democratic actors and to educate pupils to become responsible, independent individuals. Pupils, teaching staff and school management can be assured of our support in the event of far-right incidents or hostility. We aim to create special funding opportunities for projects initiated by pupils that combat the far right and promote democracy.

Democratic School

We want to further democratise Berlin's schools and make democracy a tangible part of everyday school life. We regard the class council as a key instrument in this regard. We will strengthen the work of pupil representative bodies by providing them with their own budget and clear rights – particularly in primary schools – and expand participatory projects such as pupil budgets. Pupils also need safe spaces and self-organised areas within the school where they can meet, experiment and help shape their everyday school life without being assessed or marked. We want to promote such spaces, such as school clubs in secondary schools. We want to provide greater support to the committees mandated by school legislation at school, district and state level in carrying out their duties. We want to make it compulsory for all schools to establish extended school management teams.

Strengthening civic education

The aim of the school subject 'Civic Education' is to empower young people to achieve political maturity and engage in democratic action. We want to strengthen this existing school subject and also establish it in primary schools (from Year 4 onwards) as well as in vocational schools. To this end, we will consistently provide teachers with further training and professional development opportunities to advance the professionalisation of teaching. We want to place particular emphasis on the area of critical media literacy, as young people need spaces in which to reflect on current events and their representation in the media, and to practise engaging with social media in particular. We intend to strengthen the 'Political Education in Berlin Schools' programme and support collaboration between schools and non-school organisations through an adequately funded coordination centre, as political education and democracy education also take place in a wide range of non-school learning environments.

We want to preserve this diversity and offer these organisations reliability and planning certainty through long-term funding. We want to strengthen the independence of the Berlin State Centre for Political Education – as a key player in the field of political education, from early childhood through to adult education – and secure its institutional and financial future.

Media literacy and digitalisation in schools

The self-determined and discerning use of media and information – not only, but also in the digital sphere – is a core competence in today's society. The algorithms of large digital corporations are specifically designed to maximise screen time – with all the negative consequences that entails. Media literacy among children and young people is therefore one of the central objectives of future-oriented education. Media education – including the reflective and critical use of digital tools, artificial intelligence and data protection issues, as well as the prevention of media addiction – must be made a compulsory part of framework curricula and school-specific curricula from primary school onwards. School communities

must receive appropriate training, and resources for working with parents must be expanded so that they, too, can be involved at an early stage.

Implementation requires clear lines of responsibility, guaranteed staffing resources and up-to-date equipment. We want to develop the role of IT officers into that of media officers and allocate them a fixed number of teaching hours. In future, they should no longer be deployed for maintenance and IT tasks, but should instead advise schools exclusively on digital school development. Looking ahead, we also want to bring other professional groups into schools as media officers, such as media educators. For maintenance and IT tasks, IT administrators are needed in all schools, with appropriately graded posts, preferably in the public sector. We want to strengthen the media competence centres in the boroughs as support structures.

All pupils must have access to digital devices, such as laptops, for school purposes. Young people whose families cannot afford this must be provided with a device.

To this end, we intend to use the funds earmarked in the Digital Pact 2.0 and make access to these devices as barrier-free as possible. Free internet access for educational purposes must also be guaranteed for all pupils. To avoid complications in the classroom arising from different operating systems, device types, maintenance levels, etc., and to practise working with digital devices, we plan to purchase sets of devices for each class – including for primary schools – which can be managed by the schools and used for individual lessons or series of lessons. Sustainable procurement criteria must be mandatory in this regard.

We want there to be sufficient digital workstations in schools that pupils can use independently. The devices for teaching staff must be functionality and adapted to actual needs. They should continue to be administered centrally.

We want to further develop the non-commercial ‘Lernraum Berlin’ as an open-source platform. The state platform for open educational resources should be expanded, and we want to encourage teachers to create Open Educational Resources (OER).

We take a critical view of the use of AI-based tools in schools; in particular, it must be ensured that no pupil or teaching staff data is passed on to system providers.

Assessments must not be automated but must continue to be carried out by teachers. Where AI tools are used in schools, preference should be given to cross-state developments currently funded by public money.

Developing mobile phone rules democratically

We take a constructive approach to the opportunities and risks associated with the use of mobile phones and social media. We reject blanket bans across all year groups; instead, we want rules that are developed democratically by the school community and supported collectively. We promote break times as opportunities for community rather than isolation in front of screens. Unless the school community has agreed on alternative rules, our guiding principle is therefore a mobile-free school day up to and including Year 9. Schools that already have a policy on mobile phone use may retain it. At all other schools, the school communities are called upon to draw up such a policy democratically. To support them, they will be provided with guidelines featuring best-practice examples and may use an additional study day to develop their policy.

Reducing dependence on commercial software

To promote media literacy, we see it as the role of the public education system to introduce children and young people, wherever possible, to open-source solutions and independent media platforms in a targeted manner. Social networks, file-sharing and chat platforms can also be set up in an age-appropriate way by operating them independently and controlling feed algorithms and moderation rules themselves. In this way, digital competence and independence are fostered from the very beginning.

School without homework and marks?

We want to replace numerical marks in all types of school up to and including Year 9 with oral and written feedback on performance levels. We want to enshrine this fundamental principle in the Education Act, whilst allowing the school council to decide on exceptions to it. The aim is to reduce the increasingly burdensome pressure to perform and to foster pupils' intrinsic motivation.

Together with experts and pupils, we are organising events to develop concepts and approaches for how a school could manage without traditional numerical marks even after Year 9. Homework directly translates social inequality into unequal academic achievement. Pupils from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular, have less time, space, peace and quiet, and support when it comes to completing homework. Not everyone can afford private tuition. That is why we want to phase out homework. Practice exercises, on the other hand, serve to practise and consolidate what has already been learnt and can be completed independently, such as learning vocabulary. Practising and consolidating knowledge should primarily take place at school. To ensure that all pupils can work on practice exercises under suitable conditions, there is a need for free, well-equipped and quiet spaces both inside and outside school. These spaces must there must also be the opportunity to receive support from educational professionals. It is important to us that pupils have free time outside school without compulsory tasks.

Furthermore, we want to look into reducing the number of class tests to ease the burden on pupils and teachers, and to establish more flexible, modern examination formats.

You won't get our children!

Schools are not recruitment centres for the Bundeswehr. The increasing presence of youth officers in Berlin classrooms, social media campaigns and the Bundeswehr's presence at careers fairs specifically targeting minors violate the principles of political education, such as the prohibition of coercion and the requirement for debate. Instead, we want to strengthen schools as military-free spaces and make civilian peace education compulsory

We therefore want to put an end to all cooperation between the Bundeswehr and schools in Berlin, and we are campaigning for a ban on all advertising and recruitment of minors. At the federal level, we continue to campaign for the consistent implementation of the United Nations' 'Straight 18' standard and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and thus for an end to the recruitment of minors – a practice for which Germany has already been criticised by the UN on several occasions. We also vehemently oppose the reintroduction of compulsory military service – in whatever form – and the increasing militarisation of society.

Promoting school construction and social integration

Berlin's school-building programme has created 50,000 school places since 2016, yet there is still a shortfall of over 25,000 school places. We therefore intend to continue and, where possible, accelerate the school-building programme, based on the reintroduction of a state-wide school development plan, supplemented by binding district-level school development plans. New buildings should continue to be constructed to the 'compartment' standard. In addition, we will press ahead with the refurbishment of existing buildings to prevent existing school places from being lost. With regard to the protection of listed buildings, we aim to achieve targeted flexibility and standardisation for school refurbishments. In particular, for the construction of new comprehensive schools, we also want to break new ground through the use of stacked standardised building types. We want to strengthen HOWOGE as a reliable partner. We also want to open up school buildings more to the wider community, not only for grassroots sport, but also, for example, for music schools, choirs, amateur ensembles and other uses.

This requires binding, nationwide regulations similar to the regulations governing the use of sports facilities (SPAN). The resulting requirements must be taken into account right from the planning stage of new school buildings.

In view of the immense investment required for nurseries, schools and universities, we want to launch a Bundesrat initiative for a special education fund.

Promoting all-day learning

We intend to use federal funds from the 'All-Day Expansion' investment programme to improve the quality of education in primary schools. A full-time qualified staff member should be responsible for only 15 children plus additional staff allowances, rather than the previous calculated figure of 22 children. We intend to and adapt it to the increased demands. We plan to gradually introduce a child-to-staff ratio of 1:150, capped at a maximum of two full-time posts. A reserve of substitute staff is needed to cover absences such as long-term illness, sabbaticals and maternity leave, similar to the one we are calling for in respect of teachers. Fixed hours for indirect educational work must continue to be agreed with staff representatives – finally extending beyond the four hours already agreed for nursery staff employed by the state to include those employed by independent providers as well. We want to make the payment of early years educators in accordance with the collective agreement a condition for funding from state resources. Any special educational needs identified for classroom teaching must also be taken into account for all-day care and justify corresponding staff allowances.

Wherever possible, despite the shortage of school places, dedicated premises for all-day schooling must continue to be maintained or created; premises in childcare centres that are no longer needed could also be used for this purpose. The expansion of school canteens must be driven forward, particularly in secondary schools, as pupils attending all-day school must be able to eat healthy and warm meals. We want to safeguard existing school libraries and strengthen the networking centre. Furthermore, we want to support schools in setting up and running new branches.

Municipalisation of school cleaning and lunch provision

The cleaning of Berlin's schools is to be municipalised within the forthcoming legislative period. As school cleaning is one of the districts' responsibilities, the state must provide them with the necessary staff and financial resources

. We will examine the possibility of municipalising school meal provision. The distribution of meals and the digital ordering system must be designed to be accessible, so that all children who wish to do so can actually receive a high-quality hot meal.

Strengthening extracurricular educational provision

The value of Berlin's diverse extracurricular educational landscape cannot be overstated. We are campaigning for adequate funding for the organisations running these programmes and aim to intensify cooperation between schools and extracurricular providers, particularly in the context of all-day schooling. We intend to strengthen state-run institutions providing extracurricular education – youth art schools, youth traffic schools, gardening schools and other green learning spaces, as well as music schools. Providing cultural education is the key to cultural participation, not only for children and young people, but also, in the long term, for adults. We therefore want to put it on a sound footing and ensure that its continued existence is not called into question with every new biennial budget. We also want to promote education for sustainable development.

Career guidance and vocational training

The Left stands by the principle that vocational and general education are of equal value. The technical equipment at upper secondary centres (OSZ) is to be modernised across the board and its long-term future secured. To this end, we will develop a binding refinancing model and provide the necessary funding. This will also cover the replacement of IT hardware and telephone systems.

We intend to significantly strengthen teacher training for vocational schools (OSZ) and vocational studies at the Technical University, as well as partnerships with universities of applied sciences, the career-change Master's programme and continuing professional development in these subjects. We aim to 'teachers of practical subjects' at the OSZ should be given the opportunity, via a special lateral entry programme designed for this group, to

. We want to create a dedicated career path for them.

Furthermore, we want to attract more workshop supervisors to our schools.

Career guidance must be established and monitored as a key responsibility of the school as a whole. It must begin as early as primary school. We want to expand projects such as the 'Berlin School Mentors' scheme. We want to strengthen WAT (Economics, Work and Technology) lessons across all types of school. To this end, we intend to gradually set up and modernise workshops in all schools. We are also examining the possibility of re-establishing an advisory board for vocational education/WAT. We intend to carry out a scientific evaluation of the state's career guidance framework and develop it further on that basis. Measures must be better coordinated in terms of their overall concept. We want to expand programmes such as 'Productive Learning' and practical learning groups. We intend to continue our collaboration with the Institute for Productive Learning. The quality and number of work placements must be increased. They must be adequately prepared and followed up, and integrated into general teaching. General education schools must be held accountable for opening up far-reaching future prospects for young people. The transition from school to work should be included as a quality criterion in the indicator model and in school contracts.

We want to strengthen the career and study guidance teams (BSO teams/tandems) in schools and allocate them more teaching hours.

We want every pupil to leave school with prospects for vocational or academic training. All young people should be offered a pathway that aligns with their interests, wishes and aptitudes, whilst taking their individual circumstances into account. All young people who do not wish to undertake a degree course will be offered a vocational training place (vocational training guarantee). (Regarding the vocational training place levy -> see Chapter '06 Work' on page 99)

We want to develop the eleventh year of compulsory schooling into a year of genuine opportunity. Pupils on the Integrated Vocational Training Preparation programme are to be given greater support to transfer to dual vocational training, even during the school year.

Responsibility for school-based and in-company vocational training must in future lie with a single Senate department in order to avoid bottlenecks in the transition from school to work. We are also examining the establishment of a state institute.

We intend to further develop the work of the Youth Vocational Agency and, in particular, to strengthen outreach counselling. Furthermore, we aim to ensure that binding regulations are created and implemented for the vocational support of girls and young women, young people with a history of migration or as refugees, single parents and young people with disabilities. All services must be gradually made accessible and opened up to an intercultural audience. To this end, we will improve the provision of human and material resources. This also applies to district-level youth career support services and social integration services.

Ethics for all

We are committed to ethics being taught as a full school subject in Berlin's schools. We oppose the introduction of compulsory religious education, even in the form of a compulsory elective subject.

Enforcing the ban on segregation

For Die Linke, the state school system is a priority. We therefore advocate a binding school fees scale and insist on compliance with the prohibition on segregation enshrined in the Basic Law. We reject public building cost subsidies, reduced waiting times and other incentives for the establishment of new independent schools, particularly at primary level.

Strengthening basic education, enabling participation

Basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic are essential for participation in social life. In reality, however, one in eight adults lacks these skills. We therefore want to continue to provide adequate funding for the wide range of literacy and basic education programmes in line with demand. This applies to programmes run by Berlin's adult education centres, independent providers and the state-funded Foundation for Basic Education. The aim is to remove the stigma surrounding the issue and open up low-threshold access.

Decent work for lecturers at Berlin's adult education centres and music schools

Lecturers at Berlin's music and adult education centres need secure career prospects, and those in charge in the boroughs need legal certainty. We therefore intend to offer permanent contracts to colleagues who have hitherto been employed on a freelance basis, without the need to reapply. To this end, the state must provide the boroughs with the necessary funding. Legal certainty must also be ensured at state level for those who wish to continue working on a freelance basis, based on the new regulations planned at federal level. We intend to involve the lecturers' representatives and the relevant trade unions closely in this process.

11 Children, Young People, Families

Our vision for a young Berlin

We are committed to a liveable and discrimination-free Berlin that belongs to everyone. Children and young people are just as much a part of urban society as adults, yet they remain severely under-represented in politics. Their needs must be at the heart of our policies. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people are involved in all decisions that affect them and their future. We regard the wide range of services for children, young people and their families as an integral part of public welfare provision and do not view them as potential areas for cost-cutting. We shape child and youth support in a participatory and non-violent manner, with young people always at the centre. No child should have to live in poverty; every child must be allowed to grow up carefree. Children should be able to make use of Berlin's diverse range of leisure and cultural activities, regardless of their parents' financial circumstances

. For us, nurseries are spaces where the foundations for community and educational equality are laid, and where our children acquire social, cultural and democratic skills. The Left is fighting for a diverse youth culture in our city. We resolutely oppose commercialisation, militarisation and the rise of authoritarian attitudes in the public sphere – in favour of a vibrant and forward-looking city that tackles existing injustices with creativity, action and perseverance.

Youth: Expanding rights to participation

The Left has been campaigning for the right to vote from the age of 16 for many years, played a key role in securing this right, and remains firmly committed to it. To ensure broader representation of young people in the political arena, we are considering a further reduction in the voting age. We will work towards ensuring that a young person's right to vote is linked to their actual centre of life, regardless of proof of German citizenship.

At the federal level, we call for the inclusion of children's rights in the Basic Law in a form that does not fall short of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the case law of the Federal Constitutional Court. We take a firm stand against federal political efforts to reintroduce compulsory military service. Democratic youth organisations, representative bodies for children and young people, and youth education centres are indispensable partners for us.

We advocate for binding rights to a voice and participation for young people in district councils, youth welfare committees and all other relevant bodies, because whether it be education, transport, culture, urban development or safety – decisions in all these policy areas have a direct impact on the lived realities of young people. At the state level, too, we want to expand participation structures for young people and explore innovative approaches in doing so. The diversity of formats and broad representation of all children and young people are of central importance to us in this regard.

As members of Die Linke in government, we played a key role in shaping and enacting Berlin's Children and Young People's Support and Participation Act (JugFöG), which is unique in Germany. Building on this, we want to strengthen forums for children's and young people's participation, such as district children's and youth parliaments, and grant them far-reaching rights. To establish effective support and funding schemes for children's and young people's participation, we need planning that is rooted in real-life contexts, with binding commitments, feedback mechanisms and the timely implementation of identified needs.

We want to increase funding for the Youth Democracy Fund. We will further develop the JugFöG and embed genuine child and youth participation with binding youth budgets in all boroughs. In doing so, we are committed to low-threshold access and broad participation, so that, in principle, all young people can experience genuine rights to have a say and a sense of self-efficacy. In this way, we are investing in young people and in the democratic and social future of our city. The JugFöG sets out a wide range of services for Berliners aged between six and 27: children's and youth leisure facilities, holiday trips, children's and youth farms, international

encounters and cultural leisure activities are defined in terms of quality and scope. For Die Linke, these services constitute fundamental infrastructure that must be safeguarded. The further development of the JugFöG and its services will continue to require a clear political commitment, adequate funding, coordination centres within the youth welfare offices, and the meaningful participation of children and young people themselves.

Who does the city belong to? – Safeguarding open spaces

Young people need spaces beyond school, home and commercial environments, where they can meet, experiment and shape their own activities on their own terms. Whether it's a youth club, an adventure playground, a sports hall, a public library or a self-managed meeting place – we want to safeguard and expand all these facilities. To improve the use of these spaces in the evenings and regardless of the weather, we will find creative solutions and strengthen cooperation between youth work and other stakeholders in the local community, such as neighbourhood centres or cultural and sports clubs.

We regard youth clubs as ideal venues for political education and low-threshold participation, as mechanisms of social exclusion often come into play in schools or youth parliaments, and privileged groups are over-represented. The Left will campaign for at least one self-managed youth centre per borough, as these are indispensable spaces for critical engagement, solidarity and the development of alternative ways of life.

Displacement and gentrification particularly affect children and young people with limited financial means. Their specific needs – such as sufficient park benches – must be taken into account in urban and green space planning. The Left will continue to campaign for non-commercial spaces such as youth clubs. We resolutely oppose the militarisation of public space and clearly reject the Bundeswehr's active engagement with young

by the Bundeswehr – for example, at neighbourhood festivals – a clear 'no'. Police checks carried out without reasonable suspicion disproportionately affect young people with a presumed migration background – we will abolish this discriminatory practice.

Young people are among those most frequently affected by rent poverty. We will cap rents for places in student halls of residence and support the establishment of a Berlin Youth Housing Agency. We want to ensure that the Studentenwerk and the future Auszubildendenwerk are creditworthy, so that they can enter the housing construction sector themselves and renovate their housing stock more quickly. Through the Secure Housing Act, we will set quotas that must be allocated to so-called housing emergencies.

This also includes care leavers who are looking for their own flat after leaving residential youth care or foster families. We want to create more places for young people in supported accommodation and youth housing groups.

The Left is developing a cross-generational programme that offers older people substantial financial incentives to take in young people looking for accommodation. Social service providers will support this process with a tailored approach, mediating in the event of conflicts and ensuring security for both sides – financially and personally.

Mobility is also key to participation: we are campaigning for a permanently free public transport pass for all school pupils, apprentices, volunteers and care leavers in Berlin.

Digital sovereignty and consumer protection

We want youth work that takes young people's digital reality seriously. We will protect digital spaces as places for self-expression. However, social media can sometimes act as a magnifying glass for social problems, with young people often becoming pawns in commercial interests. Our principle is: we regulate platforms, not children and young people. Instead of a rigid policy of bans, we focus on

empowerment: we want well-resourced media literacy centres in all boroughs, free, pedagogically supported programmes and regular training for educational professionals, so that young people, parents and professionals can engage with digital media confidently and critically. Young people must be treated as a target group

to receive all the support they need to recognise consumer traps and act sustainably, for example when it comes to marketing strategies in online shopping or nutrition.

Strengthening psychosocial health

Berlin needs a coordinated approach to psychosocial prevention and better psychosocial care for children and young people. Loneliness, experiences of bullying and discrimination, addictions, mental health conditions and neurodivergence amongst young people must be recognised and addressed at a structural level. To this end, we will strengthen cooperation between stakeholders in the health sector, youth social work, schools and youth support services. Youth work plays a guiding role in this context: it helps to raise awareness of existing services, such as family counselling centres. We aim to strengthen low-threshold crisis chat services and helplines, as well as in-person drop-in centres located where children and young people actually spend their time.

Discrimination-sensitive youth work and inclusion

We are committed to youth work that is sensitive to discrimination. Youth work must be a safe space for everyone and a key component in its own right of a city-wide anti-discrimination strategy; this requires empowerment approaches, political education tailored to specific target groups, (digital) violence prevention and diversity management within youth organisations and children's and youth work facilities. We are committed, across all boroughs, to anti-racism as well as feminist and queer projects, so that every young person can help shape our city on an equal footing. Genuine inclusion means structural change. We will ensure that inclusive child and youth support does not become a cost-cutting measure. Open youth work centres must be equipped in terms of facilities, staffing and programme design in such a way that young people with disabilities are not merely included, but are a natural part of the community. This also requires better coordination of the interfaces between youth support, social welfare and schools, particularly with regard to clear

responsibilities. Furthermore, policy must be understandable: we are committed to ensuring that political information is made available to young people in plain language and in formats tailored to their needs.

Anti-fascism in youth work

The far right is increasingly promoting its worldview amongst young people, seeking access to youth leisure facilities or specifically targeting young people's unmet needs. Here, we need to strengthen district-level street social work, as well as clear guidelines, responsibilities and reporting procedures that help de-escalate acute incidents and protect those affected. We will expand target-group-specific programmes and measures to help young people leave extremist groups, which mitigate contributing factors such as personal experiences of violence, barriers to education, and a lack of professional and social integration. Initiatives to combat child poverty must be more closely integrated, as social injustice has been shown to make young people more susceptible to authoritarian ideologies.

The freedom of expression of youth work organisations is a precious asset that makes a nuanced engagement with the far right and anti-democratic attitudes possible in the first place, and which Die Linke defends vehemently.

Climate justice and an ecological future

The climate crisis poses a massive threat to the freedom of future generations. We stand in solidarity with the youth climate movement and regard climate protection as a social issue. Youth work is a key setting where young people are empowered to shape their own futures and to campaign for a just and sustainable society that protects the environment and promotes respect, compassion and a sense of responsibility towards animals. Through the diverse range of youth work programmes, children and young people develop, in the spirit of education for sustainable development, the skills and collective strength to bring about change

. We will incorporate their demands into our political decisions through binding participation structures.

Reliable Structures and Quality Work

Child and youth welfare services must not be used as a bargaining chip, even when funds are tight. We want to strengthen local authority services; at the same time, non-profit and collectively-agreed independent providers remain our indispensable partners. Die Linke is examining how the funding period can be extended. In the medium term, we advocate a new approach to funding and a move away from the project-based nature of child and youth welfare, as building lasting relationships requires long-term, reliable funding structures.

Furthermore, in line with the existing incentive models under the JugFöG, The Left is campaigning for the earmarking of funds for the entire child and youth welfare sector: money earmarked for youth clubs must actually reach the youth clubs and must not be spent by the boroughs on other purposes.

We want all child and youth welfare services to be provided by qualified staff in decent working conditions: Die Linke is campaigning for collective agreements to apply in the sector funded by grants, as well as to public and independent organisations. We will support the establishment and work of works councils and staff councils, and promote their importance to society as a whole.

Youth welfare: putting people first

Young people's right to participation and involvement plays a particularly important role in crisis situations and fragile family contexts. We advocate an approach whereby the decisions required within the framework of educational support (HzE) are made jointly with the young people concerned on an equal footing, rather than over their heads. To ensure greater structure and transparency in conflicts within child and youth welfare, we will expand the existing independent arbitration and ombudsman services and raise awareness of them. We also uphold the principle that material

material hardship within the family must never be the sole reason for separating parents and children.

Young adults

Berlin needs consistent protection for young adults. Unaccompanied minor refugees in particular, but also many other care leavers, fall out of the youth welfare system on the day they reach the age of majority and, in the medium term, into homelessness. Yet there is a legal entitlement to residential care until the age of 21, and in justified individual cases until the age of 27. Given the current strain on youth and social services departments, we also want to prioritise the sensitive transition period between coming of age and adulthood by providing conceptual and financial support.

Refugee children and young people – equal rights for all!

The Left is committed to the right to a childhood for all and to comprehensive legal equality for young refugees. Many young people – particularly those who have experienced displacement or discrimination – only receive psychosocial support once the crisis has already become acute. We call for immediate, unbureaucratic access to low-threshold, early-intervention support services such as psychosocial centres, as well as to trauma therapy. In the residential sector of the HzE, places must be provided for unaccompanied refugee minors must be reserved on a scale that takes account of the volatile global political situation.

Strengthening families: in all their diversity

For us, family is wherever people live together and look after one another. Our concept of family is open and diverse. We champion the rights of single parents, blended families, solo parents, rainbow families and foster families. We support all family forms and aim to create and expand the structures they actually need in their day-to-day lives. For example, we will specifically expand the network structures

for single parents and improve their social and financial security. Despite their interest, individuals often decide against taking in a foster child because

there is a lack of structural and financial support to help them balance work with being a solo foster parent. We will change this and, furthermore, ensure that all foster families are treated equally with other families in financial terms. For families with children requiring intensive care, the option of a break – as provided by short-term care – must be made available as a matter of course.

The Berlin Family Support Act (FamFöG) is a success for the left. It sets binding standards for family support in terms of scope, quality and funding, thereby establishing a comprehensive network of services across all districts to provide low-threshold support for families. We will consistently implement and further develop the FamFöG to safeguard family centres, family service offices and parenting and family counselling centres. Effective family support requires reliable structures and long-term funding.

Tackling child and family poverty head-on

Child poverty is family poverty. In Berlin, almost a third of all minors are dependent on state support. Poverty is not just material deprivation; it also excludes young people from social participation, education and healthy development. The State Commission for the Prevention of Child and Family Poverty is developing a cross-departmental, city-wide strategy to improve the situation of children, young people and their families who are living in poverty or at risk of poverty. We are committed to strengthening the State Commission both financially and structurally. The introduction of a basic child allowance at federal level has failed. We will campaign via the Bundesrat for a genuine, poverty-proof basic child allowance.

We want all public services for children and young people to be free of charge, without complicated applications or stigmatising means-testing. We have already ensured free nursery places, free after-school care up to Year 3 and free meals at

primary schools. But we must go further: every child must be able to go to the swimming pool or cook at the youth club free of charge. We will explore new ways of ensuring services are free of charge.

Nursery care: Focus on quality!

We are committed to every child's right to high-quality early childhood education, upbringing and care that promotes their holistic development. The pedagogical and conceptual foundations for this was laid many years ago; the Berlin education programme has so far been regarded as exemplary nationwide. For Die Linke, it is clear that there must be no rollback in our understanding of early childhood education. We are firmly committed to an education programme that views the child as an active participant in their own developmental and educational processes, and in which diversity, awareness of discrimination and participation play a significant role. We categorically reject any contrary, backward-looking intentions.

To ensure high-quality childcare provision with effective language support, inclusion and child protection, all Berlin childcare centres require appropriate facilities and staffing levels based on scientific evidence. We want to increase the floor space per child. We will use the decline in the birth rate to improve staffing ratios in the long term. Our aim is to have a ratio of one qualified staff member to three children under the age of three, or 7.5 children over the age of three. Staff absences due to illness, holidays and further training must be realistically taken into account when calculating staffing levels, as must the time spent on documentation, working with parents and staff meetings. Only qualified staff should be fully counted towards a nursery's staffing ratio. Through an open discussion process with experts and practitioners, we intend to review, expand and improve the current staffing allowances.

The nursery is often the first place where potential child protection cases come to light. The Left will further strengthen child protection in nurseries. Without exception, all staff must be thoroughly familiar with and confident in applying child protection procedures. We want binding

Set time allocations for relevant qualifications and supervision. We want to provide fixed time budgets or additional staffing resources for the prevention and counselling work carried out by child protection specialists in childcare centres.

There is a high staff turnover in childcare centres. No other group of employees has more days of sick leave than childcare workers. These professionals bear responsibility for our most precious assets – our children – and many of them are burning out due to the difficult working conditions.

Added to this are physical strains; noise levels of 90 decibels are not uncommon in childcare centres. We are campaigning for active health and noise protection, as well as heat protection measures, in all childcare centres. Only in this way will the childcare sector – which is fundamentally based on building ongoing relationships – remain attractive to staff in the long term.

Taking effective action: expanding social work in childcare centres

Nursery social work promotes nursery attendance within the local community, helps families with bureaucratic challenges and, where necessary, refers them to appropriate support services. It strengthens child protection, acts preventatively and minimises follow-up costs in the more resource-intensive child and youth welfare services. Nursery social work takes the pressure off staff and nursery management, thereby helping to reduce sick leave and staff shortages. This kind of relationship-building work requires reliability and consistency: We are committed to maintaining, further developing and expanding the 'Day-care Centre Social Work' pilot programme in stages, so that, in the medium term, 10 per cent of children in Berlin's day-care centres benefit from it, particularly those in challenging circumstances. The long-term aim is to establish day-care centre social work across the whole of the State of Berlin and to secure its regular funding.

Securing and rethinking nursery resources

The expansion of nursery places in Berlin is nearing its provisional end. We will systematically safeguard existing places through refurbishment.

At a time when child numbers are falling, we are committed to doing everything in our power to retain nursery resources such as premises and staff within the system, so that they continue to benefit the children and families of this city. We will use premises that become available and renovation funds, for example, for language support, therapy programmes and accessibility improvements.

Given the volatile global situation, it is not possible to make reliable demographic predictions. We must therefore ensure the childcare system is flexible and resilient to crises. We will open up temporarily unused nursery spaces, without red tape, to child and youth welfare services, all-day primary schools and local family centres, as well as to shared accommodation facilities and adult education centres.

Furthermore, we want to retain the excellent specialist staff in the childcare sector and related fields, and develop sustainable strategies to this end.

The five municipal childcare centres run by the State of Berlin have demonstrated for many years that even very difficult situations can be managed within childcare centres. This is illustrated, for example, by the priority admission of children requiring intensive care or those with refugee backgrounds. To ensure a stable foundation, we want to strengthen the State of Berlin's municipal childcare centres and increase their share of Berlin's total childcare provision to one third. We will examine how the state-run centres can take out loans on a limited scale and be given greater consideration in urban development contracts.

Nurseries are structurally underfunded. We will gradually phase out the current 5 per cent contribution required from nursery providers towards the funding of places. With a view to ensuring adequate and crisis-proof funding, we will subject the entire child-related funding structure of Berlin's childcare centres to a fundamental critical review. Alternatives or additions, such as flexible budgets for childcare centres, must be given serious consideration, in line with a long-standing demand from childcare providers. The Left Party is examining the introduction of a tiered special levy for employers (a childcare fund), which would be earmarked to fully fund high-quality early years education and care for all children in Berlin. Because lifelong learning begins with the very youngest, we believe that early years education is

an integral part of the education system. We are therefore committed to structurally embedding childcare within the education sector in the long term.

Lowering barriers, making access to childcare easier

Nursery is the first important place of learning outside the family. Yet children with disabilities or from financially disadvantaged or culturally marginalised groups are often denied access to nursery. We want to enable all children to have broad, transparent and equitable access to fundamental educational and living spaces. Every family in Berlin must receive a nursery voucher – written in clear, easy-to-understand language, including in simple language and in multiple languages – by their child's first birthday. By strengthening outreach social work in local neighbourhoods, we will lower the barriers to nursery access, specifically involving family centres, doctors' surgeries, shared accommodation facilities and neighbourhood mothers. The principle is this: no matter where a child grows up in Berlin, families must find a good range of nursery places everywhere.

We are committed to parents' right to choose and express their preferences when looking for a nursery place. It is important to us that youth welfare offices have access to a certain percentage of nursery places in order to meet the needs of children and families facing particular challenges. We want to provide funding to ensure that a certain number of places are reserved at independent providers and in council-run centres. Not only nursery centres, but also childminding services need social and financial security. We are campaigning for remuneration that covers the actual cost of living and rents. The improved staff-to-child ratio in nurseries must be extended to home-based childcare facilities without causing them financial hardship. We firmly oppose the social segregation of privileged groups through additional payments – such as those arising from compulsory membership of nursery support associations.

Multilingualism in nursery settings is a valuable resource from which everyone benefits. A child's native language helps to shape their identity, and it has been proven that proficiency in one's native language also facilitates the effective learning of other languages. We

are committed to ensuring that the diversity of children's native languages is recognised, encouraged and practised in communication with parents and in everyday life at the nursery, for example through the nursery's own language workshops. In this way, Berlin takes account of the city's diverse society, prevents exclusion and promotes the acquisition of the German language.

Every child has a right to language support. We advocate the goal of enabling all children to attend nursery for at least 24 months before starting school, as the link between the language proficiency of Year 1 pupils and the number of years spent in nursery is clear. The remit of the district youth and education authorities for language proficiency assessments must be reorganised. The Left opposes fines for parents deemed uncooperative and advocates for trust-based social work in local neighbourhoods.

Children with disabilities or special support needs are systematically disadvantaged when it comes to accessing nursery places. We will develop a strategy for accessible early years education with clear quality standards, which does not view inclusion in nurseries as an option, but makes it the norm. This requires sufficient accessible nursery places close to home, recognition of individual support needs beyond rigid support categories, and the consistent provision of specialist staff in therapeutic, social and inclusive education in all nurseries. We are committed to inclusive pedagogy as an integral part of all training programmes in the nursery context. To ensure smooth transitions, we want to guarantee that children's individual special educational support continues seamlessly when they start school.

To strengthen the link between childcare centres and parents, ensure communication within the local community and facilitate teamwork and documentation, we will campaign for childcare centres to be systematically equipped with modern media. We aim to firmly embed the development and use of media education concepts that promote language development and inclusion in the day-to-day running of childcare centres.

In future, qualified staff will receive more intensive training in the use of modern media as part of their initial and continuing professional development.

Thinking about tomorrow: professionalism and training

Berlin needs reliable, continuous and high-quality training for early years educators. Numerous qualified staff will be taking their well-deserved retirement in the coming years; Die Linke intends to actively promote careers in the early years sector. Education, childcare and support constitute a complex remit. We are firmly opposed to the current trends towards deprofessionalisation in this sector.

The work of career changers and early years educators undertaking in-service training also remains valuable. Vocational colleges need additional resources here to facilitate cooperation with the various practical training centres. We want to offer career changers comprehensive training programmes so that they can achieve training level 6 in accordance with the German Qualifications Framework (DQR) and are thus on a par with fully qualified early years educators in terms of competence, status and pay.

We will launch a quality initiative in training and increase the proportion of state-run schools involved in training early years educators and social education workers. Private social services schools should be subject to the same quality standards as state schools. To this end, we will conclude target agreements on quality assurance with all training institutions; these will in future be a prerequisite for state approval and funding of training programmes.

The Berlin Left is campaigning for uniform national educational and facilities standards in childcare centres and advocates standardising and streamlining the current multitude of social pedagogy training programmes. Practical training hours as part of a training programme must, as a matter of principle, be remunerated. We are fighting for the introduction of explicit training contracts, distinct from regular employment contracts.

Educational Support – Changing Structures

Educational support services (HzE) encompass a wide range of support and assistance services for children, young people and families in challenging life situations. These services are funded through district budgets, which, however, are underfunded. The Left will advocate for the reliable, timely and needs-based provision of educational support, ensure quality standards, improve the financial and staffing resources of the boroughs, and never allow budgetary constraints to dictate the specific nature of individual support measures. To ensure that youth welfare offices are fully operational, the costs of educational support must be borne in full by the State of Berlin.

The Left stands for strong public responsibility in youth welfare. We want to end dependence on market-based mechanisms and regain the youth welfare offices' control over service provision. To this end, we will press ahead with the development of our own local authority services (remunicipalisation) – particularly to safeguard emergency care and in areas where private markets fail. The aim is a strong public core that sets (quality) standards and guarantees resilience in times of crisis.

At the same time, we recognise the great value of a diverse range of service providers. Non-profit, collective-agreement-bound independent providers remain indispensable partners in ensuring tailored safe spaces and a variety of educational approaches. To put an end to destructive competition for places, we are introducing a transparent, city-wide placement management system. This ensures that places are allocated solely on the basis of professional criteria, not economic interests. In this context, we are considering a ban on profit-driven corporations in youth welfare services.

Regional Social Services and Child Protection

The Regional Social Service (RSD) needs a recruitment drive: we are aiming for a significant reduction in the caseload-based staffing standards and align our objectives with those of the

meet the trade unions' justified demands. Work within the RSD must become more attractive: Die Linke is campaigning for a binding right to regular supervision and further training, and will review the adequacy of staffing and resources every two years. In this context, innovative measures such as the recruitment of administrative staff, similar to that in schools, or the expansion of specialised training modules focusing on youth welfare services, should be considered.

The Child Protection Network has proved its worth. We intend to continue promoting it in future, with a focus on prevention and early intervention, and to further develop its conceptual framework. The state and districts must jointly ensure that home visits take place following the birth of a child. We intend to provide the Public Health Service (ÖGD) with the appropriate resources, as it is a vital part of the reporting chain. In initial and continuing training for family court staff, the specific concerns of child protection must form part of the curriculum. We require all facilities where young people spend several hours a day to draw up and implement protection plans against sexual and physical violence, developed with the involvement of the children and young people themselves.

12 Climate, Environment, Disaster Protection

Climate

Implementing climate protection and climate justice

The global climate crisis, which is being further exacerbated by the dynamics of the capitalist economic system, threatens our future and our ability to live together. In Berlin, its consequences have long been felt. Berlin must do its bit to boost climate protection and adapt to the consequences of the climate crisis. Globally and locally, those who have contributed the least to the climate crisis are the ones who suffer the most from it. In Berlin, too, it exacerbates social injustices. We are shaping climate policy for and with the people of Berlin – for greater social cohesion and a city worth living in for everyone. We call for effective climate policy that does not come at the expense of people on low incomes and other marginalised groups. Our aim is for everyone to be able to live self-determined lives with dignity, in a spirit of solidarity, with a stable climate and intact ecosystems.

We want Berlin to become a climate-neutral city by 2040 at the latest, to adhere to the CO_2 budget enshrined in the Climate Protection Act, and thus to contribute to meeting the targets of the Paris Agreement. We want climate protection to be enshrined as an objective in the Berlin State Constitution. We want to expand the climate impact assessment into a climate safeguard, so that, where there is any doubt, more climate-friendly alternatives must be chosen for all legislative and Senate proposals. We call for improved monitoring of climate policy and want to place greater emphasis on the entire Senate's responsibility for climate policy. We will achieve the sectoral targets for energy supply, transport, buildings and the economy primarily through energy saving, increasing energy efficiency and utilising renewable energy, reducing and shifting transport, switching to electric propulsion, and space-saving construction. To this end, we will enshrine sector-

budgets and mechanisms to ensure compliance. We intend to specifically strengthen our collaboration with other cities to achieve climate targets, so that we can learn from their successes and challenges.

Berlin's Energy and Climate Protection Programme must be further developed, better adapted to the climate crisis and finally adopted by the House of Representatives.

Massive investment is needed in the expansion of public transport, in electric buses, in the climate-friendly conversion of district heating, in increasing the capacity of the electricity grid, in socially responsible energy-efficient building refurbishment and much more. To this end, the Climate Pact with public enterprises must be consistently implemented throughout its entire term, and funds from the federal government's special infrastructure fund must be utilised. The boroughs, too, must be provided with adequate funding for their climate protection measures.

We will strengthen participatory instruments in climate protection, such as randomly selected citizens' councils or participatory budgeting, so that citizens can play a concrete role in shaping local climate protection measures. Furthermore, we will expand the mandate and resources of the Berlin Climate Protection Council.

We intend to strengthen cooperation with Brandenburg, particularly with regard to the production of wind and solar energy. We support the prompt phasing out of coal use in Brandenburg and are committed to ensuring that the negative impacts of opencast lignite mining on Berlin's water supply are reduced.

Ensuring energy-efficient building refurbishment is carried out in a socially responsible manner

The buildings sector is responsible for around half of CO_2 emissions. Energy-efficiency refurbishment and the transition of the heating supply to renewable energy sources are the key levers for achieving a climate-neutral building stock. We therefore aim to increase the rate of building refurbishment to at least 2 per cent per year

, whilst prioritising the buildings with the poorest energy performance. It is important to note that the heating transition must not be implemented at the expense of tenants or lead to their displacement.

Public buildings should play a pioneering role in energy-efficient and environmentally friendly refurbishment. To this end, we intend to significantly increase funding for the energy-efficient refurbishment of public buildings and launch a refurbishment programme for the 'worst-performing buildings' owned by the state's housing companies, so that the refurbishment backlog, which runs into the billions, can be cleared.

We want existing coal, oil and gas heating systems to be replaced as quickly as possible with climate-friendly heating systems. Outside district heating networks, electrification is, in most cases and from a society-wide perspective, the most efficient solution. Gas heating systems should also no longer be installed in public buildings.

Grant-based funding schemes for energy-efficiency refurbishment must be expanded to ensure that funding is not passed on to tenants and that the rent including heating costs does not rise following refurbishment. When making use of regional funding programmes, landlords should be obliged, amongst other things, to draw up a refurbishment roadmap and to provide accompanying advice to tenants. Where legally possible, landlords should be obliged to make use of funding programmes. This will enable significantly reduce modernisation charges, limit rent increases following refurbishments and enable refurbishments that do not affect the total rent.

In addition, we propose the creation of a central point of contact to help tenants understand the actual energy savings achieved through refurbishments and to carry out cost-benefit analyses.

Consistently implementing municipal heating planning and the heating transition

Key steering mechanisms for the heating transition in Berlin are municipal heating planning and the decarbonisation roadmap for

district heating, which must include detailed long-term plans for phasing out fossil fuels in the heating sector. These are fundamental to achieving a climate-neutral building sector. In implementing the heating plans, we will provide comprehensive support to Berliners through advice from a heating agency and funding. We will support the boroughs in creating structures to implement the heating plans and develop neighbourhood concepts, including by providing more staff and funding for resident participation.

We are committed to expanding the district heating network and developing local heating networks in densely populated areas. In particular, in areas under review as part of the heating plan, clear guidance is needed to ensure that individual solutions do not render future heating networks uneconomical, thereby resulting in higher costs for connected households. Our aim is to decarbonise heat supply through the use of renewable heat, whilst ensuring security of supply and affordability. Outside the central district heating network, we will provide targeted support for neighbourhood-based approaches and local heating and cooling networks.

From 2027, based on the Municipal Heat Plan, we will determine where in Berlin connection to a heating network will be possible. Outside the central district heating network, we will provide targeted support for neighbourhood-based approaches and local heating networks, and to this end we will also press ahead with connecting public buildings. We intend to secure suitable sites for energy infrastructure.

The expansion of Berlin's electricity grid – which is also necessary for the heating transition – must be taken into account in the Municipal Heating Plan and consistently implemented by the State of Berlin. We will provide the necessary equity capital. We are examining whether public service facilities can be connected to the electricity grid as a priority.

Wood combustion is not a climate-neutral alternative and, due to its limited availability and environmental impacts, must only be used to a very limited extent to meet heating demand. Only waste wood or

damaged timber. For the Klingenberg site, we will seek alternatives to wood combustion.

We want a smart mix of heat generation that harnesses the full potential of renewable heat and waste heat (e.g. from data centres). New development areas should be supplied with climate-neutral heat, for example through geothermal local heating networks or heat from wastewater. We want to tap into the potential of large-scale heat pumps, which utilise, for example, river water and wastewater, for heat supply. We want to ensure the coordinated use of the limited resource of waste water heat to implement our heating plans. The systematic development of geothermal energy represents an important contribution to decarbonisation. We are accelerating the exploration and development of the potential of deep geothermal energy, increasing the number of exploratory boreholes and securing them.

We aim to deploy further systems that convert surplus electricity from renewable energy sources into heat (power-to-heat).

To ensure sufficient heat in winter and increase flexibility, additional heat storage facilities must be installed. This also applies to combined heat and power generation, so that we can store the heat lost during conventional electricity generation.

We will limit the thermal utilisation of organic waste to the extent necessary. In the case of sewage sludge incineration, efforts to reduce nitrous oxide emissions must be prioritised.

Waste incineration for heat generation does not contribute to the decarbonisation of district heating and should be limited to what is absolutely necessary. In doing so, we will utilise the remaining quantities as efficiently as possible for electricity and heat.

Expanding renewable energy in the electricity sector

Renewable energy in Berlin must be consistently expanded further. We will set Berlin on the path to achieving the target set out in the Solarcity Masterplan: to realise a solar power potential of 4.4

gigawatts. By 2030 at the latest, we will implement the installation of solar panels on all suitable roofs of public buildings, monitor compliance and impose appropriate consequences for non-compliance. We intend to remove existing barriers to balcony solar power systems and continue the current subsidy scheme in such a way that low-income households receive greater support.

In response to the attacks on the electricity grid, we will support Stromnetz Berlin GmbH in implementing measures to enhance the resilience and security of the electricity infrastructure. We will specifically implement further measures to safeguard against power cuts, such as strengthening emergency power supplies and isolated grids, as well as retrofitting PV systems operated by Berliner Stadtwerke with battery storage capable of providing emergency power.

We aim to expand wind farms with the involvement of local residents and boroughs and intend to implement the Onshore Wind Energy Act. However, this must not be at the expense of environmental protection and nature conservation, and wind turbines should preferably be erected in industrial areas. The boroughs should receive a financial share of the profits.

In Berlin, only green hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources should be used. This is a precious resource, as it is costly to produce and involves high conversion losses. It should therefore only be used where there is no direct electrical alternative, e.g. as fuel for ships and aircraft, in industry, or to cover peak demand in district heating supply. Financial support should be provided for equipping state-owned vessels and vessels used in Berlin's tourism sector with zero-emission propulsion systems. The development of storage technologies for renewable energy in Berlin should continue to be promoted.

Tackling energy poverty

We intend to continue the measures to prevent energy poverty and the disconnection of electricity and gas supplies. We intend to expand the energy debt advice service provided by the Consumer Advice Centre and other advisory services

on energy saving, and we intend to expand the grants available for the purchase of energy-efficient appliances for low-income households.

To ensure socially acceptable heating prices and public acceptance of the heating transition, the rising costs of district heating must be capped. This must be achieved through investment support, comprehensive transparency regulations on pricing, price controls and a price cap or upper limit based on competing supply solutions, in order to prevent monopoly pricing.

Heat supply via external providers who take over a building's entire heat supply (heat contracting) is often characterised by a lack of transparency in pricing, and tenant protection is inadequate. At the federal level, we will campaign for clear and tenant-friendly rules on heat contracting.

Through the Bundesrat, we intend to campaign for socially tiered electricity prices with an affordable basic allowance for everyone, as well as a ban on energy disconnections.

Using public ownership to drive the energy transition

Thanks in part to our many years of campaigning, Berlin's electricity and district heating networks are municipally owned, and Berliner Stadtwerke has established itself as a key player. Given its growing responsibilities and increasing importance, Berliner Stadtwerke should be organised as an independent company and separated from Berliner Wasserbetriebe so that it can play a leading role in the energy transition.

In order to implement the heating transition and the phase-out of natural gas in a way that is, above all, socially responsible, but also efficient and coordinated in terms of infrastructure, we advocate the remunicipalisation or socialisation of GASAG, provided the purchase price is reasonable.

We intend to make active use of public enterprises to consistently steer the energy supply towards a climate-neutral and socially responsible model and to secure the necessary investment for the energy transition.

Profits from energy companies should be used primarily for grid expansion, the promotion of renewable energies and the prevention of energy poverty. We will reorganise the structure of Berlin's public energy sector to pool expertise and improve cooperation. All public enterprises should work closely with Berlin's municipal utilities. At Berliner Energie und Wärme (BEW), we will strengthen the involvement of citizens and civil society.

Advocating for climate protection at federal level

Many of the urgently needed measures can only be taken at federal level. We will campaign to ensure that Berlin advocates in the Bundesrat for effective measures and federal funding for climate protection and climate adaptation, and that climate protection is enshrined in the Basic Law as a joint responsibility.

We want to abolish the modernisation levy. We are committed to improving the framework conditions for tenant-generated electricity, whereby locally generated, low-cost electricity is supplied directly to local tenants. Furthermore, we intend to consistently push for stronger regulation and targeted funding at federal level for the expansion and decarbonisation of heating networks. We advocate for progressive support schemes that are tiered according to income brackets, so that low- and middle-income households receive particular support.

Adapting to the climate crisis

As a result of the climate crisis, Berlin is experiencing an increasing number of hot days and growing drought. Population groups that are already disadvantaged are particularly hard hit by this. We will address shortcomings in particularly vulnerable urban areas to enable all Berliners to enjoy a good quality of life.

On the basis of the recently passed BäumePlus Act, we will expand Berlin's street tree population to one million by 2040 and provide the necessary funding for planting and maintenance. To finance this, we intend to utilise the federal government's special fund as well as all available funding opportunities, including urban development grants. We also want to involve citizens in the implementation process through various opportunities for participation. For the effective implementation of the 'BaumEntscheid', car parks must also be utilised if no other areas are available.

We want to care for and preserve Berlin's trees. For unavoidable felling, we want to adjust and increase the compensation payment to reflect the actual costs involved. In doing so, the crown diameter must be taken into account as an indicator of ecological value. The watering of urban trees should be carried out by streets and green spaces departments that have been strengthened in terms of both staff and funding. Water availability must be taken into account when devising the watering strategy. We want to strengthen our district building yards and parks departments by bringing them back under municipal control. The greening of public spaces and the creation of green oases is essential. Green corridors should be strengthened and interconnected.

The capital needs a socio-spatially differentiated heat protection plan with binding measures, uniform guidelines for the boroughs and adequate funding for healthcare facilities, residential neighbourhoods and public spaces. Structural heat protection in residential buildings and in buildings where people are required to stay for extended periods (such as prisons, hospitals and care homes) is mandatory. We want to create cool interiors in public buildings in every neighbourhood. Public playgrounds, paddling pools and water features should be fitted with sunshades. Areas where cool air is generated, such as Tempelhofer Feld, must not be built on.

Environment

Combining environmental protection, climate action and social justice

The climate crisis, which is gathering pace, presents us with particular challenges, especially in our cities. The health and financial burdens are distributed extremely unevenly, both geographically and socially. People living in poverty are more likely to live in environments that are already causing ill health, are exposed to higher levels of noise pollution and poorer air quality, often have to pay higher energy bills, and have less green space in their neighbourhoods. For us, environmental justice means that green open spaces, clean air and local recreational facilities are part of public services. Particularly in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods, we will consistently implement measures to reduce noise, improve air quality, provide protection against heat and ensure a better provision of green spaces and urban trees, based on the Environmental Justice Atlas, which is to be updated every two years, so that the city becomes a place worth living in for everyone.

Protecting urban green spaces and promoting biodiversity

A sufficient number of parks, cemeteries, green strips, trees and allotments are essential not only for the people of Berlin but also for the protection of the rich diversity of flora and fauna. The growing city of Berlin needs sufficient urban greenery close to where people live. To this end, we want to create more natural areas and place existing ones under protection. With this in mind, we will further develop legal regulations for better protection of green spaces and areas in order to safeguard them in the long term. The Berlin Urban Greenery Charter must be updated and underpinned with a new timetable. Biotopes should be linked to form biotope networks, and light pollution must be reduced. We want to consistently safeguard and expand the professional and climate-appropriate maintenance of parks, gardens and urban trees, with a priority on biodiversity. We will draw up new species protection guidelines, which have been long overdue.

We intend to amend the cemetery development plan to preserve cemeteries as public green spaces. For all new construction projects, we will stipulate a mandatory minimum proportion of green space (biotope area factor) to reduce heat, safeguard habitats for animals and plants, and improve rainwater infiltration. The 'Gardens of the World' will celebrate their 40th anniversary in 2027. We will mark this occasion in a fitting manner and offer all Berliners free entry to the gardens on 9 May 2027, the day they were founded. To mark the 40th anniversary, we will develop a long-term plan for the 'Gardens of the World'.

Berlin is also home to many wooded areas, which serve the purposes of nature conservation, recreation and also help to cool the city. We intend to take the necessary measures to preserve and safeguard the forest cover. We want to commission an expert assessment of the so-called forest conversion to climate-adapted mixed forests, with a view to improving forest quality. Fundamentally, we want to view Berlin's woodland less from a forestry perspective focused on timber yields and much more as a near-natural, self-sustaining ecosystem.

We will consistently implement the European Renaturation Regulation and restore lost natural habitats to a healthy state, such as moors and green spaces. In disadvantaged neighbourhoods, we need to purchase land and develop it into green spaces. Parks, woods, cemeteries, allotments and water bodies are essential for life in the city during the summer months. They must not be built on.

Protecting the soil

Soil is a common good. We advocate net-zero soil sealing by 2030. Where land is sealed within Berlin, an equivalent area must be unsealed. The unsealing programme will be consistently implemented during the next legislative term. Where land use is unavoidable, we are firmly committed to ensuring that compensation areas are located as close as possible. To better manage land use, we want to transparently record the loss and gain of green spaces – including compensation areas – as well as new and replacement

planting, in a land register. We intend to finalise the soil protection strategy and submit it to the Berlin House of Representatives so that it can finally be implemented. We aim to rewet and conserve bogs, such as the Barssee in Grunewald, in order to restore and secure their function as carbon sinks in the long term. We intend to counteract pollution caused by ‘forever chemicals’ such as PFAS, microplastics and other environmentally hazardous substances by ensuring greater public awareness and sustainable monitoring. The ‘polluter pays’ principle applies to remediation costs. Our soils also need rest and extensive management to ensure good humus formation.

Water Quality and Groundwater Management

We aim to safeguard the high quality of Berlin’s water and drinking water supply in the long term, as well as ensuring that the water cycle is regulated in a way that is compatible with both nature and the city. The costs of water protection must be allocated in accordance with the ‘polluter pays’ principle. The priority of the drinking water supply must be taken into account and enforced in all administrative decisions. This also includes setting minimum groundwater levels as part of the authorisation procedures for groundwater extraction.

We support close consultation with the relevant bodies in Brandenburg and Saxony. We will introduce a reporting obligation for all private wells and for commercial water extraction, requiring the disclosure of extraction volumes. To protect against damage caused by groundwater and stratum water, measures must be taken to maintain and renew drainage systems. The European Water Framework Directive (EU WFD) must finally be implemented by 2031, not least to avoid EU sanctions. We will protect ponds and pools from silting up and ecologically restore them through a ‘Small Water Bodies Water Quality Improvement Programme’. The use of hire boats and private boats should be better regulated to reduce wave action and noise that are harmful to the shoreline. We will charge companies a fee for the abstraction of surface water. Drinking fountains, ornamental fountains, emergency wells and swing pumps must be preserved, repaired and

upgraded. Trees should not be watered with drinking water, but with rainwater and treated greywater.

Berlin is becoming a ‘sponge city’

Berlin is pursuing the ‘sponge city’ principle through the removal of impervious surfaces, rainwater management, and the expansion and maintenance of natural areas. We intend to expand rainwater management through on-site infiltration, including within the existing housing stock, for later use. The state-owned housing associations and public properties play an important role in this. To ensure that wastewater no longer flows into the River Spree and other water bodies, we will improve the framework conditions for the disconnection of areas within the combined sewer system. Priority will be given to areas with emergency wastewater overflows into open water bodies. Cross-property solutions for rainwater management offer the opportunity to integrate the disconnection of existing systems with the irrigation of urban green spaces and street trees. The discharge of untreated water into our water bodies must be reviewed and, where possible, stopped.

The Berlin Rainwater Agency, as the central advisory body for the transition to a ‘sponge city’, will be better resourced to fulfil its remit. We intend to promote water conservation and the increased use of greywater through statutory regulations. We will support pilot projects run by state-owned housing associations that research and advance the use of greywater in existing buildings. We will make it easier to install rainwater barrels in public spaces, thereby enabling citizens to support the transition to a ‘sponge city’.

Allotments and urban gardening

As an integral part of Berlin’s urban green spaces, allotments and urban gardening areas make an indispensable contribution to the preservation of biodiversity, nature conservation and the recreational well-being of residents. They are important as carbon sinks and areas where cool air is generated. They also have significant social importance,

serving as places for intergenerational interaction and education, and they contribute to local and sustainable food production.

We will therefore safeguard public and private allotment sites as well as community gardens through legislation, and permanently preserve and expand them via the land-use plan and local development plans. We intend to update the Allotment Garden Development Plan – with the involvement of the wider community – as an urban development plan for allotments and have it adopted by the House of Representatives. We are committed to ensuring that new green spaces include a mandatory proportion of community gardens.

Clean air and less noise

We intend to implement the measures set out in the Clean Air Plan without delay and to keep it constantly updated. We will reduce air pollution and traffic noise by, amongst other things, reducing private motorised transport, introducing speed limits, carrying out noise-reducing modifications to roads and railway lines, and planting trees and shrubs. Ambient noise in specifically designated urban areas that are heavily frequented by tourists is to be reduced. The noise reduction plan must set out further measures to reduce aircraft noise in the vicinity of BER. We are advocating to the shareholders of the airport company for the extension of the night-time flight ban to between 10 pm and 6 am. At national level, we are campaigning for a comprehensive ban on fireworks.

Prevent, reuse and recycle waste

The guiding principle of waste policy is: prevent – reuse – recycle – dispose of. We support the development of a circular economy in Berlin. We are making the repair bonus a permanent feature and expanding both it and the repair networks. We are committed to establishing further second-hand department stores in Berlin – at least one per borough. To promote circular lifestyles, conserve resources and reduce waste volumes, one of our goals is to set up at least one neighbourhood circular centre in every borough. This will ensure that repair and lending services – as

community-led, solidarity-funded basic infrastructure accessible to everyone, available throughout the city. We support craft and repair businesses – such as alteration tailors, electronics technicians and watchmakers – as a vital part of a functioning circular economy. We are committed to ensuring that the retail and catering sectors donate surplus food to charitable organisations.

The Zero Waste Agency will be better resourced in line with its remit, to give greater priority to the principles of waste prevention, reuse and upcycling. City-wide expertise will be pooled within the agency, waste advisory services and educational programmes expanded, and funding allocated. The recycling and collection rates for plastic, glass, paper, clothing and electronic waste must be increased. We want to promote the switch from single-use to reusable packaging. To this end, we propose a reusable packaging support programme for small and medium-sized catering businesses to facilitate and support the transition.

In future, breaches of the obligation to provide reusable options will be systematically penalised by the public order authorities, which will be strengthened in terms of both staffing and funding for this purpose and in line with their wide-ranging responsibilities. We want to introduce deposit return machines in high-traffic areas to ensure better collection of returnable bottles. Through campaigns targeting the general public and the housing sector, we will tap into the as yet untapped potential for increasing biomass. To ensure the climate-friendly processing of increased volumes of organic waste, we will provide the necessary funding to build a second biogas plant in Berlin. We will set up pilot projects for alternative uses of bio-waste, such as the energy recovery of grass clippings and leaves. Additional investment is needed for the maintenance of BSR's facilities. We will update the waste management strategy with the involvement of the city's residents.

A Clean City

To prevent fly-tipping and ensure a liveable city, we want to expand waste collection services

and organise them close to where people live. Waste disposal must not depend on one's financial means. In a growing city, we need more recycling centres and local disposal facilities, e.g. with dedicated bulky waste collection points in large housing estates. In future, land will be set aside for this purpose in the new urban districts. Underground waste containers can make an important contribution to keeping existing housing estates clean and should be prioritised in the new urban districts. We are expanding the so-called 'neighbourhood days' for bulky waste and recycling organised by the BSR. These need to be highly reliable in terms of location and frequency so that the service is taken up even more widely. Retail car parks are to be used more extensively for holding these neighbourhood days. In addition, bulky waste collection is to be free of charge twice a year per household in future. We will promote clean-up campaigns in neighbourhoods to raise public awareness of the importance of a clean city. In districts particularly affected by litter, we will arrange for more frequent street cleaning and increase the number of public litter bins. Housing associations should employ caretakers across their estates on a comprehensive basis, tailored to local needs. Caretakers make an important contribution to keeping residential neighbourhoods clean. Residents and neighbourhood councils should also be more closely involved in future.

The classification system for street cleaning, as well as the allocation of costs and the reliability of street cleaning services, must be evaluated and adapted to people's everyday realities. The BSR must be structurally strengthened and supported. More staff are needed at the BSR to meet the demands of a growing city. The boroughs should be provided with more funding for the maintenance and cleanliness of parks and green spaces. Park attendants must be brought under the Senate's regular funding scheme and their responsibilities expanded.

Strengthening environmental education

Protecting our climate and preserving our natural environment is a cross-cutting task for the whole city. We therefore

therefore also expand environmental education initiatives for children, young people and adults, such as those in school gardens. This also includes the urban nature rangers and park rangers. In nurseries and schools, greater emphasis should be placed on teaching climate and environmental education. The programmes offered by forest schools play an important role in this. We want to continue supporting the 'Edible City' and 'Green Learning Spaces' projects, as well as the Long Day of Urban Nature. We will strengthen the environmental education coordination centres in the boroughs. School playgrounds will in future be redesigned to be climate-resilient and close to nature, with the involvement of the pupils.

Free public toilets for Berlin – abolish user charges and expand the number of locations!

Toilet provision is part of the public infrastructure and determines who can move about in public spaces – and thus participate in public life – and how. Whilst urinals are generally available free of charge, a usage fee is charged for many public toilet cubicles. We want to end the unequal treatment of people at public city toilets. To this end, we want to make public toilets in Berlin accessible to everyone free of charge, round the clock. Regular maintenance and cleaning must be ensured in terms of both funding and staffing, and the barrier-free and environmentally friendly development of toilet sites must be prioritised.

The siting of new toilet facilities should be determined through a broad participatory process, in particular involving representatives of people with disabilities and older people, and should take particular account of proximity to public transport stops to ensure seamless travel connections, as well as proximity to Berlin's urban green spaces and playgrounds. The needs of the boroughs are to be regularly assessed, and a reporting centre for citizens' needs is to be established. For the new toilet facilities to be built, particular consideration is to be given to environmentally friendly and water-saving alternatives. Where possible, toilet facilities should be fitted with drinking water dispensers on the outside, and their roofs should be greened or fitted with solar panels.

Animal welfare

Strengthening animal welfare and animal rights

Animal welfare has constitutional status in Berlin. Animals are to be respected as sentient beings and protected from avoidable suffering. This must become the benchmark for political action in all areas. We are therefore consistently committed to animal rights, regardless of whether the animals live in the wild, in zoos, in circuses, in research laboratories or in private households.

The establishment of an independent, full-time state animal welfare officer with an adequate budget for events and training will be revived. The Berlin Animal Welfare Collective Action Act will be further developed.

We will systematically promote alternative methods to animal testing. Together with representatives from research, science, industry and animal welfare organisations, a plan to phase out animal testing will be developed. Similar to the approach in the Netherlands, there will be concrete measures and timetables for reducing and ending animal testing in the various sectors. The State of Berlin's research prize for alternatives to animal testing will be revived.

The Berlin Animal Shelter will be adequately funded so that it can provide animal welfare training and education on animal-friendly care. Funding will be made available for the neutering of stray cats. The Berlin Tiertafel will be supported so that animals do not suffer when their owners face financial hardship.

We reject the prejudicial treatment of dogs on the basis of their breed and therefore wish to abolish the breed list in Berlin as well. We oppose the euthanasia of dogs following biting incidents. Instead, Strategies to prevent hazards should focus on dog owners, who must demonstrate their suitability to keep a dog. We aim to maintain and expand off-lead areas for dogs in suitable locations and are allocating funds for this purpose.

One of the most common causes of death among birds is collision with glass façades on buildings. As early as the construction planning stage, this must be taken into account, along with the protection of birds that nest in buildings and bats. Ornithologists must be consulted during renovation and demolition work.

We want to introduce a pigeon management scheme that combines animal welfare with aspects of urban cleanliness. In supervised pigeon lofts under the responsibility of the boroughs, healthy food and water must be provided, the lofts must be cleaned, and the population must be regulated by replacing the eggs.

We will develop a rat management scheme that reconciles the requirements of a healthy city, water protection and animal welfare.

Our hunting laws are outdated. A fundamental reform of hunting is needed, one that prioritises animal welfare and nature conservation. Accordingly, we call for a complete ban on the use of lead-containing ammunition, as well as an end to the hunting of predators such as foxes and martens.

In all public canteens, the range of plant-based options must be expanded and at least one plant-based dish must be provided. Animal ethics and education on healthy and climate-friendly nutrition should be included in school curricula.

As animal welfare makes no distinction between wild animals and domestic animals, we advocate for the management of animal-related matters within a Ministry for the Environment and Animal Welfare that encompasses all animal species.

At the federal level, we are campaigning for higher standards in the keeping of pets and so-called farm animals, for a ban on animals in circuses, and for a reduction in VAT on plant-based products.

13 Feminist Politics

Feminist politics for a good life free from oppression

Gender justice must be achieved everywhere. However, feminist politics aims not only at equality in individual areas and aspects, but at dismantling the structures that deny all people who face discrimination on the basis of their gender equal participation and a free choice of life paths. This also includes the recognition that women and queer people who are affected by racism, disability or poverty are subject to multiple forms of discrimination and, as a result, have particular needs for protection and support.

Equal pay and fair opportunities

Gender inequality is not a thing of the past – on the contrary: the pandemic and other crises have once again exacerbated existing inequalities in income, wealth, working conditions, leisure time, access to opportunities and socially necessary work. We want to change that.

We want to increase the proportion of women in employment subject to social security contributions, in specialist and management roles, and improve the work-life balance. Sectors with a high proportion of women – such as care, cleaning, social and educational professions, midwifery, the hospitality industry and retail – must finally be given greater structural and financial recognition.

Decades of austerity policies have led to poor pay and excessive workloads in these sectors. We are committed to staffing levels that meet actual needs and to fair pay.

In addition, we are expanding programmes that make it easier for women to enter and progress within male-dominated sectors: through targeted training, mentoring, binding gender equality targets, the removal of structural barriers and public funding that

compels companies to pursue gender-equality-oriented staff and organisational development. Our aim is genuine equality of opportunity in technical professions and leadership roles – regardless of gender or social background.

In Berlin, we are campaigning for a cross-senate strategy to combat pay inequality and for greater pay equity. Even though key regulations must be established at federal level, the State of Berlin can already set an important course today, for example by strengthening collective bargaining coverage, enhancing the status of occupations with a high proportion of women, creating the framework conditions for reconciling paid work and care responsibilities, and ensuring a lifelong right to up-to-date qualifications and further training.

Supporting single parents

Single parents are particularly likely to face precarious working conditions and low pay. In Berlin, over 85 per cent of them are women, of whom around 30 per cent have a migrant background. This structural imbalance hinders their educational pathways, social participation and life prospects, as well as those of their children, and in many cases leads to health problems.

The Left Party intends to continue and expand existing state programmes for single parents: by providing better opportunities to catch up on school and vocational qualifications, more part-time training places, and reliable, long-term support and advice. We want to make it easier for them to take up and carry out paid work, as well as to participate in social life, by offering and facilitating childcare beyond the usual hours.

For refugee single parents, we aim to expand existing, target-group-specific services and create new ones to ensure that language learning and vocational training are as accessible as possible.

Making Berlin a Caring City

Unpaid care work is still predominantly carried out by women. The gender care gap shows that they spend significantly more time each day on childcare, housework and caregiving than men. At the same time, the privatisation of essential public services means that more and more care work has to be managed privately. This places a particular burden on low-income households and makes it more difficult for women to participate in society. Reducing the burden of care work is an essential step towards equal access to good employment, pay and time.

Our aim is a city where looking after one another makes everyday life easier, enhances quality of life and strengthens the community.

-> see chapter '02 Urban Development' on page 41

Defending and strengthening women's infrastructure

Women's projects such as women's refuges, girls' drop-in centres and clubs, women's centres, advice centres and self-organised initiatives are expressions of feminist self-organisation as well as places of solidarity, emancipation and mutual support. They create safe spaces, promote self-determination and make valuable contributions to social equality. Thanks to their close networking, they possess a high level of professional expertise and support women in coping with difficult life situations. We are committed to securing, expanding and financially strengthening women's infrastructure in the long term. Staff working in women's projects must be paid in line with collective agreements and in accordance with their qualifications. Only in this way can the continuous and high-quality work of these organisations be guaranteed.

Istanbul Convention

Gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sexism and the killing of women and girls must have no place in our society. We are committed to ensuring that every form

of violence is resolutely condemned and consistently combated. Women, girls, non-binary, intersex and trans* people continue to be disproportionately affected by violence, particularly in domestic and private settings, but also in public spaces. Our aim is to effectively tackle these abuses and provide comprehensive protection for those affected.

We demand that the Violence Against Women Act and the provisions of the Istanbul Convention be implemented consistently by all Senate departments. The state's own contribution to the funding of anti-violence work and support structures must not be replaced by federal funds under the Violence Against Women Act. We are campaigning for a Bundesrat initiative that provides for the extension of the Violence Assistance Act to trans*, intersex and non-binary people, as well as to refugees and migrants affected by gender-based violence, in order to guarantee their right to accommodation in shelters and to qualified counselling in a legally binding manner.

To ensure effective implementation, we call for the establishment of a state-level coordination body for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. This body should improve strategic cooperation between the state and the districts, ensure the quality of measures and guarantee a socio-spatially equitable distribution of projects across Berlin, particularly in the outlying districts.

Furthermore, we will strengthen preventive approaches and permanently institutionalise work with perpetrators in the context of domestic violence. Perpetrator programmes must be made compulsory for those who commit domestic violence and implemented consistently. Education and training – particularly in schools – must provide targeted information on sexism, domestic violence and stereotypical gender roles. In order to combat violence in all its forms effectively, state structures and institutions themselves must also be critically reviewed and further developed.

We are committed to ensuring consistent protection against violence for people with disabilities and to establishing well-resourced women's officers in communal living arrangements. The Senate should set binding minimum standards for the content of violence prevention strategies and ensure that their implementation is regularly monitored by the relevant

supervisory authority. The residential care supervisory authority should also promote targeted networking and close cooperation with existing anti-violence counselling services in Berlin.

Self-determination in sex work

We are campaigning for a review of Berlin's Prostitutes' Protection Act, based on the expertise of sex workers. Sex workers must neither be criminalised nor stigmatised by legal regulations. We regard the Sex Work Act, drawn up by sex workers' self-representative bodies, as a suitable basis for ensuring better working conditions, greater safety and health, and the strengthening of sex workers' rights. We oppose the establishment of exclusion zones. We advocate for dignified workplaces in the sex work sector, such as so-called 'service cubicles', which ensure safety and hygiene standards for sex workers.

Migrant sex workers require specific, low-threshold and multilingual counselling services, as well as reliable protection and prospects, particularly where their residency status is precarious. Access to counselling, healthcare and protection must be guaranteed regardless of residency status.

We call for the establishment of a drug consumption room specifically for women, non-binary, intersex and trans* people who work in the sex trade .

14 Migration Policy

Berlin: Rainbow Capital and a safe haven for all

Berlin is and will remain a place of longing for queer people from all over the world. To ensure this remains the case, the city must not rest on its past laurels. Die Linke Berlin will, together with the communities, critically evaluate and consistently develop the initiative 'Berlin stands up for self-determination and the acceptance of gender and sexual diversity' (IGSV). The IGSV is to be brought back from the administration into the parliament. We want to further develop existing forms of representation for queer communities in a democratic manner, for example by introducing a queer advisory board.

We are placing social issues at the heart of queer politics, as queer people are disproportionately affected by poverty and precarious living conditions. Our focus is therefore on those who experience multiple forms of discrimination. We are developing targeted support programmes for queer refugees, queer people with disabilities, and trans* and non-binary people in the labour market. The valuable work of the queer community needs security. We are ensuring long-term funding rather than short-term project-based initiatives, and we are campaigning for funding bodies to fully adopt collective agreement pay rises, so that 'good work' is also recognised within the queer community.

We place particular emphasis on lesbian visibility in order to bring it out of the niche. Lesbians in Berlin have often carried out work in solidarity with others, yet frequently remained invisible in the process. We want to change that. The alarming decline of lesbian bars and meeting places must be halted. We will specifically support cultural venues and projects that highlight lesbian history and the present day and facilitate networking. Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring that deserving lesbian pioneers finally receive the place in the cityscape to which they are entitled, for example through street names and monuments they deserve. We are working to ensure that the specific concerns of lesbians, such as discrimination in the labour market and experiences of violence, are explicitly taken into account in all political strategies.

Access to healthcare in Berlin must not be a matter of financial means or identity. We call for non-discriminatory healthcare for all. This includes barrier-free and free access to PrEP for everyone who needs it. The unacceptably long waiting times for trans*-specific treatments, such as surgery and hormone therapy, must also be reduced. We are committed to expanding specialist practices and strengthening capacity in hospitals. To this end, we want to train doctors and therapists in queer identities. The health of young TIN* people is a particular concern of ours. Queer youth centres need funding to be able to afford gender-affirming products and services. Overall, we affirm that queer youth work is an important part of queer life in Berlin, and we oppose the current Senate's policy of cuts.

The lack of affordable housing poses an existential threat to many queer people. We will require municipal housing associations to establish more effective anti-discrimination bodies and expand services aimed at preventing homelessness amongst LGBTIQ+ people. We will provide massive support for projects promoting queer housing for older people and intergenerational housing schemes, and prioritise these when allocating state-owned land. As queer refugees are often subjected to violence in collective accommodation, we call for decentralised accommodation and the maintenance and expansion of specific safe-haven accommodation for LGBTIQ+ refugees.

Queer bars, clubs and centres are not merely commercial enterprises, but indispensable safe havens and spaces of freedom that are under threat from displacement. Instead of heavy-handed plans, we are committed to a strategy of securing these spaces. We want to enshrine queer venues as 'cultural conservation areas' in federal law in order to protect them from the purely profit-driven property market. Venues that become targets of anti-queer attacks will receive unbureaucratic financial assistance to repair the damage. We also provide targeted support to queer venues to remove architectural barriers, so that participation is possible for everyone.

It is time for full legal equality. We are campaigning for the inclusion of sexual identity in Article 3 of the Basic Law and for a reform of the law of parentage that will finally grant equal status to rainbow families. In the Bundesrat, we will advocate for the progressive development

of the Self-Determination Act (SBGG) and resolutely oppose any attempt by the right to roll back these reforms.

Violence against queer people is on the rise, but we know that for many in the community – particularly BIPoC and trans* people – more police presence does not automatically mean greater safety. We need effective measures against hate-motivated violence that are firmly enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), tackle the root causes and make awareness-raising within public authorities mandatory. We call for the expansion of independent reporting centres for anti-queer violence and the strengthening of victim support services, so that those affected can find help even without filing a police report.

The increasing militarisation of society does not stop at attempts to exploit the queer community. We reject the Bundeswehr's increasing use of queer spaces as a platform for recruitment. We will campaign to ensure that the Bundeswehr is not involved in their funding either.

We take a firm stand against queerphobia in schools. We will ensure that every school has qualified staff responsible for gender and sexual diversity and will strengthen external queer educational initiatives. Binding guidelines are needed for dealing with trans* and non-binary pupils. Non-discriminatory access to school places must be guaranteed. Gender diversity should be explicitly enshrined in the framework curricula.

Berlin has a proud tradition of queer visibility. In the face of right-wing mobilisation, Die Linke guarantees that queer people can safely exercise their right to demonstrate and that Pride parades are supported both politically and structurally.

15 Higher education, science, teacher training

Good education and free scholarship are fundamental rights and pillars of our democracy. We on the Left actively oppose all attempts to restrict these fundamental rights. We are committed to opening up access to academic education and science and to breaking down social barriers. We stand for strong, publicly funded universities and research institutions that, together with our city and in its service, develop the knowledge of tomorrow. Our universities must remain places of open debate and democratic discourse.

Ensuring reliable funding for higher education

Following the CDU-SPD Senate's policy of drastic cuts, we want to conclude reliable university funding agreements that do justice to the universities' remit and provide them with adequate funding. To this end, immediately after the election, we will carry out a review of the cuts to funding, staff posts and student intake capacities, and assess the universities' financial requirements. Together with the universities, we will draw up a vision for the development of the higher education landscape by 2035, which will form the basis for further structural development processes. In particular, securing university places must be a priority. This also includes art colleges and faith-based universities, which make an important contribution to education – particularly in the social sector – and to the cultural landscape far beyond the city limits. Consultations on the structural orientation of individual higher education institutions should be supported by the Senate Administration, without depriving the institutions of their autonomy or relieving them of their responsibility. Rather, both structural planning and development and staffing plans must be drawn up by the directly elected governing bodies of the higher education institutions.

Good education and research require good learning and working conditions. We want to clear the backlog of refurbishment and investment projects.

A creditworthy public

university building company used to finance this will only be established with our support if the right of co-determination for the universities, their members and staff is guaranteed; if jobs in the universities' building departments are safeguarded; if it is guaranteed that the university building company will not engage in outsourcing or circumvent collective agreements; and if it is guaranteed that the university building company will not displace student spaces or open spaces. The decision on the nature and design of construction and renovation projects will remain with the universities. We reject PPP schemes in which profits accrue solely to the private sector, land is handed over to investors and the risks remain with the universities or the state. We will ensure that those affected are appropriately involved in the implementation processes through the university bodies.

Studying in Berlin will remain tuition-free – including for international students. We will increase state grants to the Studierendenwerk in line with needs to ensure support for students in all areas, from counselling and catering to accommodation.

Opening up science in Berlin, further digitalising it and developing it for the city

Without science, Berlin would not be Berlin. We want to preserve and expand the diversity of scientific activities carried out by universities, research institutes, academies, scientific associations and other scientific stakeholders, and continue to connect them through dialogue with the wider urban community. This is not only about knowledge transfer and exchange with cultural institutions, social service providers or the private sector, but also about universities as venues for democratic discourse. In this regard, we on the Left also wish to focus our attention on the vast majority of society who, beyond research projects, require scientific solutions to their significant challenges – be it in the field of ecological urban development, in the fight against climate change and its effects in an increasingly hot city, or in the inclusion of all people, whether newcomers or those born here.

Thus, the tasks and research questions of universities should be developed in collaboration with the urban community, and the scientific findings should be made available to the urban community in an appropriate manner. We want to further expand Open Science through targeted funding and provide greater support to researchers and lecturers in making their findings available to the general public in the spirit of Open Research and Open Access, as well as implementing the relevant legal requirements to this end. In addition, measures for science communication should be expanded and safeguarded. We want to enable the Senate Administration to appropriately stimulate and support this process.

Good working conditions and reliable staffing structures

Modern science is a team effort. The staffing structure must reflect this and ensure open access to a career in science. In this regard, permanent tasks must, as a matter of principle, be underpinned by permanent posts. All staff employed at universities contribute through their work to the fulfilment of institutional tasks and thus to its success. This must also be reflected in the allocation of job profiles and responsibilities. To this end, we wish to introduce a central body to assess the job profiles of staff in technical, service, administrative, teaching and research roles.

We support the further implementation of departmental structures and, consequently, greater academic autonomy alongside the professorship. This also includes the abolition of the de facto chair system. In this context, the lines of authority and professional supervision for staff in technical, service and administrative roles must also be reassessed and regulated.

We are committed to ensuring that remuneration for teaching assignments is set at a level that covers all the costs incurred by lecturers and, in particular, prevents the minimum wage from being undercut. Teaching assignments should serve to impart additional qualifications and must not replace the core teaching provided by permanently employed academic staff. We will continue to oppose wage-dumping measures such as the large-scale outsourcing of core areas of activity, which

which particularly affect staff in technical, service and administrative roles, and reintegrate these areas into the university where necessary.

To improve structural working conditions, we intend to make the 'Forum for Good Work' operational and press ahead with the implementation of measures developed there; in doing so, all employee groups – staff in technical, service and administrative roles, academic staff including lecturers and Privatdozenten, student employees and professors – must be taken into account. Furthermore, we support the work of the staff representative bodies, including with regard to the implementation of the provisions of the collective agreement.

We wish to harness the changes in the higher education landscape and in the way tasks are carried out for the benefit of those involved and, for example, take these into account in teaching commitments when expanding research at universities of applied sciences.

Higher education for all – for equality and protection against discrimination

We want to remove the structural barriers to studying and academic activity at universities. To this end, we want to expand and consolidate mentoring programmes and measures to support students from non-academic backgrounds and those with a migrant background, as well as safeguard the orientation year.

Opportunities for students to study whilst working or carrying out care responsibilities should be expanded.

We want to return the responsibility for recognising university entrance qualifications for international applicants to the universities themselves, thereby developing an alternative to Uni-Assist.

We want to strengthen the inclusion of people with special needs or disabilities by promoting the provision of appropriate study and work environments and by removing administrative barriers. Furthermore, we want to expand and consolidate support services for groups affected by discrimination, including non-binary and

queer people, in order to sustainably reduce disadvantages faced by all minority groups.

All members of higher education institutions contribute to the fulfilment of the institutions' remit. We aim to strengthen the participation of all groups by further democratising the governance structures at higher education institutions and promoting opportunities for co-determination. We will abolish the blanket exclusion of staff in technical, service and administrative roles from academic self-governance and allow them to have a say in appointments as well. Furthermore, we support universities in introducing committees with equal representation across all sectors.

We want to finally implement the legal requirements for anti-discrimination work and take further measures to prevent the abuse of power. To this end, we intend to expand and strengthen both centralised and decentralised structures for anti-discrimination work. We will focus on the prevention and combating of discrimination and the abuse of power.

Gender equality in academia needs a new impetus. We will expand the Berlin Programme for Equal Opportunities and take action against the discrimination of women in all structural processes.

In higher education institutions, we aim to strengthen support services for those affected and academic self-governance by ensuring mandatory participation in all structural decisions at both central and decentralised levels.

Promoting quality in teaching and study

Innovative teaching that also addresses the challenges of future society is research-based. We therefore wish to further strengthen research-oriented teaching at universities. To this end, we also intend to expand and support collaborations with research institutions. Furthermore, we promote the quality of teaching by continuing to support the Berlin Centre for University Teaching (BZHL).

To reduce the barriers to engaging with course content, we intend to expand and safeguard student-led tutorials. Furthermore, we aim to strengthen the culture of feedback between students and lecturers and regard this as a key aspect of teaching quality assurance. Quality assurance systems (accreditation systems) should focus on key measures, and in particular, student feedback and expertise should be given greater weight, for example by strengthening the education committees. We intend to make all quality assurance procedures for degree programmes public and transparent.

We want to make modular degree programmes more accessible and facilitate the recognition of academic achievements obtained at other higher education institutions, particularly within the Berlin-Brandenburg higher education region. Furthermore, we want to simplify the organisation of examinations for the benefit of those involved and reduce the examination workload to the necessary minimum.

We want to abolish the disciplinary measures in the Berlin Higher Education Act, which rely solely on disciplining students.

Integrating the academic landscape, safeguarding freedom of research and teaching

At present, researchers and research content are also coming under massive attack from the right here, or are being subjected to pressure to commercialise their work. We want to safeguard the freedom of research by providing universities and the academic sector with adequate funding and protecting their autonomy. To ensure the long-term employment of those working in academia, we want to open up opportunities for pooling resources, which will allow research and academic management tasks to be carried out beyond the scope of current project funding, in order, for example, to address long-term issues and needs, such as those in medical cancer research.

We will promote cooperation between universities, higher education institutions and research organisations, and further integrate the research landscape – even beyond the Excellence Strategy. We intend to

cooperation and make even greater use of synergies, for example in the areas of infrastructure and equipment.

We want to safeguard and support critical and threatened research approaches, disciplines and the researchers involved – for example in the fields of peace and conflict research, a diverse economy, gender and diversity studies, and public health research. Researchers who face threats and hostility because of their work need protection and support.

We are committed to ensuring that universities and research institutes regard themselves as bound to the peaceful development of society, and we advocate the implementation and expansion of civil clauses. We oppose the increasing ‘securitisation’ of international scientific cooperation, which, under the banner of ‘research security’, places cooperation with key scientific partners under general suspicion.

Berlin needs more teachers!

The State of Berlin must train teachers in line with demand. We are aiming for a target figure of 3,000 teacher training graduates annually, as there will continue to be a recruitment need of this magnitude in the coming years. To achieve this goal, we intend to provide teacher-training universities with additional funding for the entire legislative term, beyond the scope of the university funding agreements, at least equivalent to the previous special programmes ‘Best Teacher Training’ and ‘Increasing the Number of Teacher Training Graduates’. We intend to introduce legislation stipulating that training capacities at universities must be mandatorily aligned with projected recruitment needs. Furthermore, we are advocating for a nationwide intergovernmental agreement on needs-based teacher training, including joint federal-state funding, and will launch a corresponding initiative in the Bundesrat.

Improving teacher training programmes and making them more practice-oriented

We want to improve the quality of teacher training programmes. To this end, the importance of teacher training at teacher-training universities must be strengthened, and the programmes themselves must be made more flexible and professionalised across all universities.

Students need the assurance that their degree programme truly prepares them for their role as teachers. To this end, we want to Expand the proportion of subject-specific content and the integration of theory and practice in teacher training programmes, and amend the Teacher Training Act and the Teacher Entry Regulations accordingly. Those teaching pedagogy should have their own practical experience of teaching.

We therefore also wish to make greater use of seconded teachers in university teacher training once again.

We will strengthen the proportion of application-oriented didactics, educational sciences and school-based practice from the Bachelor's degree onwards. Furthermore, we intend to integrate these elements more effectively with subject-specific training and give them greater priority when selecting which subject-specific components are relevant to teacher training. To this end, we aim to establish tandems comprising subject-specific disciplines and subject didactics, and to allocate resources for the conceptual development of study formats. We also intend to examine in which subjects it is possible to offer dedicated courses for teacher training students that are more specifically tailored to their needs than those designed for students of the subject disciplines. Furthermore, we aim to give teacher training students greater scope to set their own areas of specialisation.

In the conceptual review of the teacher training programme, it must be ensured that cross-cutting themes such as pedagogical attitude and multi-professional collaboration, personal and social skills, relationship-building and anti-discrimination, dealing with diversity, inclusive pedagogy, media literacy, democracy education, school development, German as a second language, working with parents, and poverty-sensitive pedagogy are given more mandatory attention within the degree programme. The teaching of these subjects must prepare students for the real-world demands of the teaching profession. Reflection on one's own educational background, early teaching placements with pupils, and

direct encounters with different school realities should help to replace the widespread deficit-oriented perspective with a pupil-centred approach.

We wish to expand cooperation between schools and universities and are exploring the establishment of a university or laboratory school. Furthermore, we aim to facilitate collaboration between schools and research institutions. We wish to ensure permeability between teacher training and academic disciplines and guarantee that even those with teaching qualifications retain the opportunity to pursue a subject-specific Master's degree or an academic career. We do not currently consider the debate on introducing a Bachelor of Education to be constructive, given the current strain on higher education institutions. To enable a faster transition from a Master's degree to the teaching practice placement, we aim to reduce the examination workload in teacher training programmes. We want to expand the Master's programmes for lateral entrants and examine the possibility of extending them to further subjects. For the training of teachers for vocational schools, we want to strengthen cooperation with universities of applied sciences.

Providing better support for the teaching placement

The practical placement semester is a central component of teacher training. We want to improve the support provided to students during this period. To achieve this, on the one hand, we need more reduced-hour teaching slots for the supervising mentors at schools; on the other hand, we will equip the teacher-training departments at universities so that they can provide better support to students. We want to expand the new 'Flex Master' programme in line with demand, so that teacher training students in all subject areas can combine their studies with paid work in this way in future. All other students must also be paid for their work during the practical teaching placement. For teacher training students who are already teaching independently whilst studying, we want to create compulsory programmes in which they can reflect on their practical experiences under guidance.

Teacher training: time for learning rather than filling gaps

We want to improve the quality of training during the teaching practice period. Support for trainee teachers through guidance, mentoring and classroom observation must be guaranteed. To this end, we want to enshrine a reduction in teaching hours for the colleagues supervising them in the allocation guidelines. In the teacher training programme, the focus is on training, not on filling gaps in the timetable. We therefore want to reduce the weekly teaching load back to seven hours. We wish to retain training in the core groups (formerly: subject-specific and advanced seminars). We reject, in its current form, the reform of the trainee teaching programme currently envisaged by the Conservative-Social Democratic coalition, which it is determined to press ahead with despite all the expert criticism and the foreseeable chaos.

Trainee teachers must be able to make a living from their full-time work. We will therefore increase the pay for trainee teachers to at least 1,800 euros. We want to make it easier to balance trainee teaching with care work through improved part-time arrangements.

We continue to view career changes as a way of attracting new teachers. The list of so-called ‘shortage subjects’, which forms the prerequisite for entry into the career change scheme, must be reviewed and expanded (e.g. recognition of German as a second language for the school subject German; access to the career change scheme for primary school teaching even with a degree in educational science and subsequent study of the subject-specific component, etc.) or abolished entirely in its current form. We also want to enable access to the lateral entry scheme for those applicants who have already studied a subject taught in Berlin schools that is not a shortage subject, but who would undertake further study in a shortage subject as part of the lateral entry scheme. The State of Berlin must also enable individuals with academic training in just one subject taught in Berlin schools to work as teachers specialising in that subject in Berlin schools, following appropriate further pedagogical training. To this end, we also wish to open up the lateral entry scheme to applicants with a single subject who have not been required to study a second subject. If they so wish, teachers with a single teaching subject must be given the opportunity to undertake further training in a second school subject whilst working. Teachers without full teaching qualifications (LovL, also: lateral entry—

For those wishing to change career paths (including those from other sectors) who have so far been excluded from access to further qualifications, the route to a career change or a Q-Master's degree with the corresponding reduction in teaching hours must be opened up, thereby creating long-term prospects for them – in one or two subjects, as they wish.

We will commission an external evaluation of the lateral entry programme at the former Centre for Education, Pedagogy and School Studies (StEPS), particularly with regard to the quality of subject-specific training in the second or second and third subjects. Furthermore, we intend to incorporate more university expertise into the training of lateral entrants.

High-quality and practice-oriented continuing professional development

We are committed to providing an attractive, high-quality and practice-oriented range of in-service training and professional development opportunities for staff at Berlin's schools. The opportunity for lifelong learning is a key component of both personal development and the improvement of educational quality in Berlin's schools. We want to make the further development of the Berlin State Institute for Qualification and Quality Development in Schools (BLiQ) significantly more transparent and to evaluate it in a timely manner. In doing so, we intend to take greater account of the perspectives of various groups, including trainee teachers, teachers and pupils. Furthermore, we will involve universities closely in the provision of further education and training. We aim to establish joint programmes for trainee teachers and practising teachers, thereby also strengthening the critical dialogue between new approaches and established practice. We intend to strengthen the areas of inclusion, anti-discrimination, democracy education and media literacy through compulsory in-service training programmes. To this end, schools are to be allocated additional study days, and these topics are to be firmly embedded within the BLiQ, including through dedicated staffing.

16 Culture

Culture is work. Culture is life. Culture stands in solidarity

What defines Berlin above all else is its culture. Many people make a living from it. Even more people measure their quality of life, in no small part, by the city's cultural offerings, and many come to Berlin because of these offerings or the opportunity to work in and for the cultural sector. Around 8 per cent of all Berliners are employed in the cultural sector, most of them working under precarious conditions.

Culture is not a luxury, but an expression of freedom and a driving force for social change. The opportunity to experience culture and the facilitation of cultural participation are, according to a left-wing understanding, fundamental rights. We defend Berlin as a city of culture for all – as a post-migrant urban society whose diverse culture we celebrate and strengthen.

Berlin's cultural landscape encompasses the major institutions as well as the independent scene, the amateur sector as well as club culture – and all the people who are artistically active in this city, who experience culture and help shape it. All of this requires spaces, funding, good working conditions and policies that view culture as a public responsibility, not as a bargaining chip. We counter right-wing and authoritarian cultural strategies with a transformation of the cultural infrastructure: moving away from representation towards stability and sustainability, with a concept of culture based on diversity and solidarity.

We advocate that cultural provision and spaces for cultural activity should be accessible to everyone – regardless of income, identity, background, migration history, gender, gender identity or gender expression, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability or chronic illness, social background or age. The guiding principles for this commitment are the State Anti-Discrimination Act (LADG) and the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG).

We support the collection of equality data in the cultural sector.

Our concept of culture is inextricably linked to artistic freedom. At the federal level, we support the call for culture to be enshrined as a state objective in the Basic Law.

Culture needs artistic freedom

Culture has become a central battleground for the far right. This 'cultural counter-revolution' aims to reinterpret freedom and solidarity in terms of ethnic nationalism. At the same time, we are witnessing an authoritarian restructuring of society from the centre. Left-wing cultural policy defends civil society networks and takes a firm stand against state ideological vetting. Those working in the cultural sector must be able to carry out their work free from fear and repression.

It is an unprecedented authoritarian development when cultural and civil society organisations are scrutinised by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution without being consulted. The application of the so-called Haber procedure to specifically exclude left-wing bookshops from state awards, as well as the ongoing political attacks on initiatives within the federal programme "Demokratie leben!" is a direct blow to critical civil society. The massive cuts since the 2024 supplementary budget are not merely a fiscal measure – they are a direct attack on the free, socially critical scene. We are resisting this economic 'lawnmower'.

The fight against all forms of racism, anti-Semitism and misanthropy is an unshakeable cornerstone of left-wing cultural policy. For us, the slogan 'Never again is now!' encompasses standing up for the fundamental rights of all. However, we resolutely oppose the misuse and instrumentalisation of such protective mechanisms to exclude legitimate critical voices from public funding.

We will preserve the freedom and autonomy of the arts and culture sector and defend it against the impositions of the market economy and against political attacks from the right. We

support projects that reflect the city's diversity. We strengthen migrant and Jewish cultures, as well as those of the Sinti* and Roma* and Black Germans, and want the full ethnic diversity of our city to be reflected in cultural institutions.

Culture needs funding

The coalition has made the culture budget a pawn in its ruthless policy of cuts, thereby sending the signal that, for them, culture is a bargaining chip. Since the 2024 supplementary budget, Berlin's already smallest budget has shrunk to less than 2 per cent of the total budget. We want this proportion to rise to 3 per cent in the coming years – and to 2.5 per cent in the short term. This will enable us to strengthen the boroughs and provide better before, for high-quality cultural work, the expansion of 'third places' and programmes promoting cultural participation.

We are committed to ensuring that a fixed proportion of the city tax is allocated in future to cultural infrastructure and basic services: for libraries, youth art schools, music schools and socio-cultural initiatives.

Culture must receive its fair share of special funds and investment appropriations. We are committed to ensuring that a portion of the federal funds allocated to the state is used for climate-neutral cultural institutions, digital archives and accessible museums and theatres.

The Capital City Financing Agreement between Berlin and the federal government is an indispensable instrument for funding culture. We are committed to ensuring that the Capital City Culture Fund is expanded, rather than cut, in the next round of negotiations.

At federal level, we are campaigning for the reintroduction of a wealth tax. Those in this society who possess substantial wealth must make their contribution to the common good – which includes public funding for culture.

We are examining the introduction of a vacancy tax on commercial properties that remain permanently vacant. Berlin currently has at least 8 per

per cent vacancy rate for commercial premises – totalling around 1.75 million square metres. As new types of tax require a basis in federal law (Article 105 of the Basic Law), we are campaigning via the Bundesrat for the necessary legal framework. At state level, we are already using the prohibition on misuse of property and regulatory instruments to combat speculative vacancy.

Culture needs support, democratisation and participation

We will evaluate and simplify the funding system – which is complicated in parts – in collaboration with professional associations and interest groups. The law governing grants must become more transparent in the interests of cultural practitioners and access to public funds. We want to expand participatory processes in planning and management – right through to exemplary organisational structures designed to be democratic from the ground up.

We support the ongoing participatory process for a Berlin Cultural Funding Act, which will serve as a guideline for the management of funding, financing and the development of culture in the city. We will ensure that artists, professional associations and interest groups, as well as cultural institutions, are involved in the development and evaluation of funding programmes. Equality with sport in terms of the use of public spaces must be established.

A fundamental overhaul of the award process must go hand in hand with the expansion of the system of independent juries and expert advisory boards. We will systematise and standardise both the composition of the juries and the work of the juries themselves, in consultation with the relevant associations, in order to ensure transparent procedures. Jury decisions are binding on politicians and will not be called into question by them.

Abuse of power in the cultural sector is a structural problem that we recognise and take seriously. We will establish an independent point of contact for those affected and advocate for binding

standard procedures for complaint and conflict management. Approaches centred on those affected take priority. To make power imbalances more visible, we call for fee transparency at all state-funded cultural institutions, as well as the disclosure of directors' salaries. We support pilot projects in which cultural institutions are organised and managed as 'Cultural Commons' and which promote the democratic self-organisation of Berliners.

We are committed to ensuring that the Senate establishes transparency regarding private third-party funding within the publicly funded cultural sector and makes this information publicly available.

Culture needs good working conditions

For many freelance cultural practitioners, arts and culture funding is a vital source of income. At the same time, for a large proportion of them, the annual income from freelance artistic work lies below the median (under 15,000 euros in 2023), i.e. below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. According to available surveys, there are around 10,000 freelance visual artists working in the city alone, of whom only 2 to 4 per cent earn a decent living.

Nationwide, Berlin was one of the first federal states to base publicly funded projects on minimum fees and rates. We advocate the further development of these recommendations and will campaign for appropriate – and therefore rising – minimum fees across all funding schemes, as well as for binding fee guidelines and minimum standards that take account of the rising cost of living.

We will campaign for collective agreements in all cultural institutions, modelled on the TVöD and TV-L. We oppose the extension of 'Normalvertrag' (NV) stage contracts to technical trades. We reject the practice of non-renewal as a means of exerting structural pressure on employees and support the relevant demands of the relevant trade unions. Any departure from collective agreements – for example, by transferring state-owned theatres to

a different model – will not happen on our watch. We say: Hands off the state-owned theatres!

We want to offer permanent contracts to all freelance staff at music schools who wish to have them, in order to put an end to a practice that has been recognised as unlawful since the Herrenberg ruling. We will allocate the necessary funds (around 19 million euros annually) in the budget. So far, no funds have been earmarked for this in the forthcoming two-year budget.

According to surveys by the Artists' Social Insurance Fund, the gender pay gap ranges between 25 and 33 per cent depending on the sector and must be closed. We want a strategy for achieving this in the long term and will pay particular attention to artists with care responsibilities. We support the idea of a fund for re-entry grants following career breaks due to care work. Expanding support for FLINTA* practitioners in the cultural sector is a matter of course for us. To this end, we are examining not only quotas but also other measures to facilitate access for FLINTA* people to Berlin's cultural sector.

At the federal level, we defend the Artists' Social Insurance Fund (KSK), aim to open it up to all creative professions and make access easier. We call for compulsory unemployment and pension provision for the self-employed to combat the threat of poverty in old age.

Our partners in these struggles are the staff representative bodies of cultural institutions, the trade unions and the advocacy groups representing the independent arts scene.

Culture needs cultural further education

We are strengthening the Foundation for Cultural Continuing Education and Cultural Consultancy both financially and in terms of staffing, and securing its work in the long term. This is because it brings together expertise in the fields of cultural education (kultur_formen), the elimination of discrimination and equal access to art and culture (Diversity Arts Culture), and, through its research, strengthens the academic basis for evidence-based cultural policy (Institute for Cultural Participation Research

). The Foundation also supports the work of the district music schools, which have around 60,000 pupils (servicezentrum musikschulen Berlin). We intend to expand these activities in a targeted manner. Training in the area of discrimination awareness and prevention is to become compulsory in all cultural institutions. We will support the existing anti-discrimination structures within the cultural sector in their work and ensure that sufficient funding is made available to them.

Culture needs a strong independent scene

The independent scene is the creative heart of Berlin. It is a place of experimentation, social debate and artistic innovation – and it is structurally dependent on reliable support. Independent visual artists, the independent performing arts, dance, literature, music and club culture need a cultural policy that recognises them not as a supplement to the institutions, but as an independent sector in their own right.

We advocate stable, multi-year funding rather than annual uncertainty, and adequate provision for collective agreements that does not come at the expense of artistic programmes. We want to further develop sector-specific funding instruments: reliable project grants, ongoing funding for conceptual work and exhibition fees as standard. We will expand entry-level funding. We will reintroduce the 'Artistic Research' programme. Funding for culture in public and urban spaces must, as a first step, be raised to the level it was at before the 2024 cuts and expanded in the long term.

Culture needs club culture

Berlin's club culture is part of this city's DNA. Clubs are safe havens for communities, places of cultural innovation and part of Berlin's international reputation. Many are on the brink of closure due to rising commercial rents and the pressure to move out.

We intend to take all necessary measures to protect clubs from being forced out of business. At federal level, we are campaigning for a cap on commercial rents, better protection against eviction, the recognition of clubs as cultural institutions in the Building Code, and a reform of noise protection legislation. At state level, we want to introduce funding for venues that recognises clubs with a socio-political commitment, expand the noise abatement fund and simplify licensing procedures. We will make it significantly easier to use public spaces for non-commercial open-air events. We want to maintain the annual Day for Club Culture. We support club structures that serve the public good and are collectively run, strengthen awareness-raising work in clubs, and promote low-threshold services to minimise harm associated with drug use.

Culture needs spaces

Many artists cannot afford the studios and workspaces available on the open market. Whilst in government, we created opportunities for many people to access affordable workspaces through our studio support scheme and workspace programme. Studios, project spaces, rehearsal rooms and other workspaces are essential infrastructure for cultural practitioners in Berlin – places for experimentation, creative work and securing a livelihood, which operate beyond market principles and have a positive impact on neighbourhoods and local communities.

The costs for this programme, which is unique worldwide, amounted to 2.4 per cent of the culture budget. The 2024 supplementary budget cut the workspace programme by half; the coalition is continuing this drastic cut in the 2026/27 biennial budget.

We will campaign for a spatial policy in the cultural sector that secures the growing need for affordable workspaces for all disciplines in the long term. We are committed to ensuring that, in addition to the existing stock, 1,000 new workspaces at cost-based rents. This requires a reliable public scheme for the general letting of workspaces, transparency in the allocation process and the expansion of existing funding programmes.

We support the development of shared resource infrastructures – material stores, equipment pools, production cooperatives – as models for resource-efficient cultural production.

We want to facilitate the cultural use of vacant properties and expand temporary uses. 1.82 million square metres of office space stand vacant in Berlin (as of 2025). Politicians have a responsibility to do everything possible to address this extremely high vacancy rate – alongside the equally acute shortage of space – with new solutions. To this end, in addition to temporary uses, we are also exploring co-operative models, partnerships and socialisation.

When developing new urban neighbourhoods, as well as in all other major new-build projects, spaces for art and culture must be planned and built in collaboration with us. We want to support schools in becoming open cultural spaces for the residents of the city's districts and neighbourhoods. We are strongly opposed to any privatisation of existing cultural venues.

Culture needs third places and strong boroughs

Third places are essential for cultural participation across the region. They are places of democracy, social cohesion, education and community. Libraries, music schools, adult education centres, youth art schools and local art galleries need a strategy that focuses on the long term and expansion, whilst ensuring reliability and predictability. These institutions, along with small performance venues and workspaces for artists, must be included in the strategies for the development of social infrastructure (SIKo). The boroughs must be involved in this process.

The boroughs play a crucial role in ensuring that culture is available across the board, close to home and accessible to all . The funding provided to the boroughs for their cultural work is insufficient. The principle of 'who commissions, pays' must apply across all areas.

It is unacceptable for costs and responsibilities to be transferred to the boroughs on the grounds of budgetary consolidation, when

for which they are not adequately resourced. Binding minimum standards are needed for all areas of district culture, a Library Development Act and a Music School Act. The legal status of music schools must be made structurally secure. To achieve this, in addition to offering permanent positions to freelance staff, a legal framework is required – such as the Music School Act and the Cultural Promotion Act – to ensure long-term planning certainty.

Surveys show that Berlin is short of 68 library branches – and there is no state library in a central location with sufficient space for everyone who wishes to use this facility. We are campaigning for a clear decision in favour of a new site for the Central and State Library (ZLB) at Alexanderplatz and for the preservation of the existing sites – Breite Straße and the Amerika-Gedenk-Bibliothek – as cultural venues.

Culture requires participation and accessibility

The opportunity for cultural participation and education from the very first year of life requires low-threshold initiatives in all planning areas: beyond libraries, this includes further ‘third places’, open cultural formats and collaborations between cultural institutions, schools and nurseries, such as TUSCH (Theatre and School) and TUKI (Theatre and Nursery), Children’s Culture Month and Urban Praxis. These must be adequately funded on a cross-departmental basis.

The KulturPass and free admission on Museum Sundays are measures that directly promote participation. We are campaigning for the permanent introduction of the State KulturPass for young people aged 16 to 21; the credit should amount to 100 euros per person per year. We want to introduce a mandatory 3-euro ticket in all public cultural institutions – available online. In addition , we want to examine the introduction of a ‘Soli’ ticket, which would enable us to provide access to cultural activities for everyone, including those who would otherwise be unable to afford many cultural experiences. At the federal level, we will campaign for the reintroduction of the abolished KulturPass. Local district galleries will be better resourced to expand their free offerings, as will cultural programmes for holders of the Volunteer Card.

For us, participation means that people seeking refuge in our country and living in refugee accommodation are taken into account and included. Outreach cultural work, as well as cultural education and participation programmes for children and young people in the accommodation centres, are urgently needed – and this requires the support of all the initiatives and projects that have made this their mission.

The situation regarding comprehensive accessibility of cultural venues and cultural programmes is not good. Accessibility encompasses physical access to cultural venues as well as accessible communication and the creation of accessible working conditions and inclusive funding structures.

Together with the institutions and representative bodies, we will develop a long-term strategy for accessible cultural life. It is important to us that people with disabilities are not merely seen as part of the audience. We are striving for accessibility both for those who engage with culture and for those working in cultural institutions – and we are providing the necessary financial backing for these measures.

Culture needs sustainability and digitalisation

Cultural institutions must be part of the ecological transition. We are committed to funding programmes that support climate-neutral productions and the ecological refurbishment of venues. We will embed sustainability criteria in our funding – providing guidance rather than imposing excessive bureaucratic burdens.

The digitalisation of the cultural sector requires a dedicated strategy: long-term archiving, accessible digital outreach and digital co-creation must be promoted. In the field of artificial intelligence, we advocate for the protection of authors' rights: transparency regarding training data, opt-out/opt-in mechanisms and fair remuneration must be enshrined in state funding schemes. At federal level, we support corresponding regulations to protect artistic work.

Culture of Remembrance

Berlin bears a special responsibility for remembrance. In Berlin, the eventful history of the past centuries and decades is present in all its contradictions. The city brings together sites of oppression, dictatorship and barbarism with sites of socialist, democratic and emancipatory movements, as well as sites of the division and reunification of two states with different social systems. Berlin is one of the birthplaces of the global socialist movement, and we wish to contribute to its self-understanding through our historically critical engagement with our own history. The Left is committed to an unbiased reappraisal of the history of the city's two halves and their inhabitants, with their diverse experiences within different social systems. We resolutely oppose any form of historical revisionism and continue to drive forward the process of coming to terms with history in collaboration with interest groups and initiatives. We advocate for a vibrant, present-oriented approach to remembrance and memorial work that not only documents history but also draws connections to today's threats to democracy and human rights. This work must be adequately funded and protected from political interference.

National Socialism and the Holocaust

As the capital of the German Reich and the site of key Nazi institutions, Berlin bears a special responsibility to ensure that the crimes of National Socialism and the Holocaust are remembered. It was here that the Shoah, the Porajmos and the Second World War were planned; it was here that the mass murder of Jewish people, Roma and Sinti, people with disabilities, queer people and opponents of Nazism began. We will continue to commemorate these crimes with dedication and to come to terms with them. We aim to do justice to the culture of remembrance in our increasingly diverse city and to the challenges of 'remembrance without eyewitnesses'. To this end, we are further developing digital and participatory formats, strengthening critical historical learning and active educational outreach. We are also continuing our work with the

initiatives engaged in active remembrance work, whom we thank for their valuable work. In this context, we are campaigning for 8 May to be established as an annual public holiday.

We will also preserve the memory of the millions of murdered Soviet prisoners of war.

History of the GDR

The history of the GDR is an integral part of the history of Germany as a whole and thus also of Berlin's history of remembrance. We honour the cultural achievements and life's work of the people in the East, without glossing over the state injustices and the lack of democracy under the SED dictatorship. Fostering a nuanced, pan-German culture of remembrance is the responsibility of the State of Berlin.

Colonialism

As the venue for the so-called Africa Conference of 1884–85, Berlin bears the marks of German colonialism to a particular degree. Streets and squares bear the names of those responsible for exploitation and genocide. We advocate for the establishment of a commission to come to terms with Berlin's colonial legacy, in which civil society actors can negotiate the renaming of streets and squares and expand the scope of remembrance within the cityscape.

We are strengthening the 'Kolonialismus Erinnern' team at the Berlin City Museum and the coordination office at Decolonize Berlin, and are pushing for the establishment of a central place of learning and remembrance dedicated to German colonialism.

Civil society and voluntary work

Berlin's social infrastructure is underpinned by the many community centres, neighbourhood houses, senior citizens' clubs and meeting places, local cafés, advice centres and initiatives promoting neighbourhoods and social cohesion. They form part of a vibrant and democratic neighbourhood and urban culture

and open up opportunities and spaces for civic engagement and participation for all. We want to preserve and expand this local infrastructure – ensuring it is accessible, barrier-free and culturally sensitive. We intend to continue the outreach work in neighbourhoods that was phased out by the Black-Red Senate.

Many Berliners volunteer in their neighbourhoods, in clubs, citizens' initiatives, self-help groups, the cultural sector, senior citizens' representative bodies, and in supporting refugees. This commitment is indispensable for the city's social cohesion. Volunteering needs support, spaces to come together, structures, and a culture of recognition and encouragement. Together with those actively involved, we will further develop the promotion of civic engagement and, when new schools are built, we will advocate for these buildings to also serve as open cultural and community spaces for the residents of the districts and neighbourhoods.

Where new residential areas are being developed, spaces for social infrastructure must be included in the planning from the outset. This requires providing the boroughs with sufficient funding to enable them to fulfil this remit.

17 Media and Digitalisation

For a democratic media policy

Berlin is a vibrant, diverse and cosmopolitan media metropolis. Tens of thousands of people work here. Changes in the media landscape can be observed here as if under a magnifying glass – and rarely have they unfolded as rapidly as in recent years. The media industry is entering a new phase of digital transformation. AI-supported processes, data-driven business models and the growing power of major platforms are profoundly altering production, consumption and public debate. This is also shaping working and market conditions in Berlin as a media metropolis. Amidst this transformation, Die Linke will continue to work alongside media professionals, employees, trade unions and institutions to ensure that Berlin remains a diverse, strong, free and, as a result, successful media metropolis – with a reach extending beyond its borders.

Public service broadcasting

With its freedom, enshrined in the Basic Law, to shape its programming independently of state or commercial influence, public service broadcasting is indispensable for our democratic society. At a time when global digital platforms and big tech corporations are increasingly controlling the flow of information, and far-right actors are also disseminating racist content on a massive scale online, it represents an indispensable pillar of democracy.

In order to live up to its importance for our society and to be equipped to withstand attacks from the right, public service broadcasting must be further developed; what has proven to be effective must be protected, and undesirable developments must be corrected. Die Linke Berlin is committed to ensuring that necessary reforms lead to a reduction in bureaucracy and do not come at the expense of staff, the programming and, consequently,

the users. The time is ripe for a genuine reform of the public service broadcasting system – in the interests of broad media participation, social justice, more information and culture in broadcast content, greater transparency in decision-making processes and in the use of funds, greater participation, and alignment with current technical standards and diverse usage habits. Journalistic diversity must be preserved.

The diversity of our society must be reflected both in the programming and within the broadcasters themselves.

We are campaigning to ensure that at least DAB+ technology is retained as a permanent means of terrestrial broadcasting. Shifting large parts of radio and TV content exclusively online would not only continue to exclude some users, but would also amount to a ‘second broadcasting licence fee’ in the form of regular costs borne individually by each internet service provider. That would be unfair.

The tried-and-tested independent calculation of the broadcasting licence fee must be retained and supplemented by an expansion of fee exemptions, which are to be compensated for from tax revenue.

Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (rbb)

As a public service broadcaster for our city and region, Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (rbb) is of particular importance. The ‘me-first’ mentality at the top of the broadcaster in the past has severely damaged rbb’s image. On a positive note, the role played by the staff in bringing these malpractices to light must be acknowledged. We on the Left are all the more committed to strengthening transparency provisions in the rbb State Treaty and expanding co-determination. Furthermore, the vicious circle of staff cuts and programme reductions must finally come to an end, especially as the claim that the rbb lacks revenue, is simply not true. For us, the principle is clear: a good rbb does not come for free. Only through high-quality programming can long-term acceptance be secured.

Equal pay for equal work should also be a matter of course for the rbb. Nevertheless, the pay for freelance staff in the programming department is lower than that of their employed colleagues, even for comparable work. The Left supports the freelance staff's fight for equal pay.

Although the inclusion of 'employee-like' freelancers under the protection of the Federal Staff Representation Act has finally been achieved after a long time, 'employee-like' women continue to be disadvantaged. The Left calls for an amendment to the Berlin State Equality Act so that 'employee-like' women are finally included within its scope.

The continuation of terrestrial broadcasting of rbb radio stations ensures the participation of all sections of the population. The Left will continue to campaign to ensure that the long-term preservation of DAB+ is guaranteed in the rbb State Treaty. We also want to enshrine in that treaty a strengthening of German-Polish cooperation as well as reporting from the state parliaments. We want to reform the composition of the Broadcasting Council so that it reflects Berlin's growing diversity.

Private media – Berlin-Brandenburg Media Authority

Developments in the field of new media, in particular, have progressed at a rapid pace in recent years. The major commercial digital platforms such as Meta, TikTok and Google do not merely act as gatekeepers between content creators and audiences online. Through the use of algorithms and personalisation, they determine which information users receive. This also undermines democracy, as it makes it more difficult to establish a common ground for social debate and an understanding of others. Furthermore, content that incites hatred, is anti-Semitic or racist reaches its target audience unhindered.

As left-wingers, we want to preserve the internet's vast potential for freedom and, for that very reason, work to counter the power of the oligopolies. We will campaign to ensure that media concentration legislation is expanded so that the commission responsible for

investigate concentration in the media sector can effectively cover market-dominant platforms, with their cross-platform influence, and take appropriate measures.

In Berlin, the Berlin-Brandenburg Media Authority (mabb) is responsible for private media, ranging from TV and radio to digital platforms. The Left views the mabb as a guarantor of our media diversity, both through its regulatory role on the one hand and its funding activities on the other. It must be strengthened to meet future challenges.

We are committed to ensuring that the planned State Treaty on Digital Media does not remain a blunt instrument, but actually provides the state media authorities with effective means to regulate the power of the major commercial online platforms, combat discrimination and strengthen transparency.

However, we do not merely wish to enable mabb, in legal terms, to keep pace with the challenges of an ever-changing digital media society. In order for mabb to fulfil its key functions, it must also be provided with sufficient financial resources. We are campaigning to finally and completely abolish the irrelevant ‘upfront deduction’ – that is, the reduction in the share of the broadcasting licence fee to which mabb is entitled – to be completely abolished at long last.

At the same time, we emphasise that supervision and regulation are only one side of the coin. We do not want to achieve the protection of young people in the media solely through technical systems. Rather, as the Left, we emphasise the role of media literacy education, developed with young people for young people. This is not only a task for mabb; it is a classic task for independent organisations in Berlin. During the budget negotiations, we will campaign to ensure that funds are made available. Every euro spent on strengthening young people’s ability to form their own judgements and engage critically with our media society is money well spent.

Independent radio stations and local journalism

Non-commercial local radio stations give a voice to social groups that are rarely represented in mainstream media. People can produce radio programmes independently, without facing significant barriers. This democratises media production and creates a kind of safe space for cultural and social diversity. As the Berlin Left, we are committed to ensuring that the specific significance of independent radio stations is recognised by having them legally recognised and safeguarded as the 'third pillar' in the mabb's State Treaty on Private Media. Furthermore, in dialogue with independent radio stations and mabb, we are striving for core funding to cover staff and operational costs.

Local journalism provides information about people's immediate living environment. It thus forms a prerequisite for the formation of political opinion and democratic participation at district and neighbourhood level. The Berlin Left wants to consolidate existing funding in order to strengthen and expand local journalism structures.

Media Board: Film, Festivals, Games

The history of Berlin as a film city is a success story with a long tradition, which Die Linke intends to continue and further develop. To this end, we want to provide the Medienboard with the funding it needs to ensure Berlin's future competitiveness as a location both nationally and internationally. In addition to supporting 'flagship projects' – which generate not only cultural attention but also a significant economic multiplier effect – Die Linke advocates funding the full spectrum of film genres, including documentaries, animation, experimental films, as well as short films and children's films. We welcome the switch to a committee-based model for the funding of film productions and new media by the Medienboard. At the same time, we propose that this approach be applied to funding decisions for film festivals as well. After all, Berlin as a film city is not just about film production; its numerous film festivals are indispensable. They embody and reflect Berlin's vibrant diversity. We have successfully campaigned for an increase in funding. We intend to

continue along this path. The Medienboard should also work with stakeholders from the festival scene to draw up transparent funding criteria that are taken into account when applications are submitted.

The games industry has long been a central part of Berlin's media and creative industries. Since funding began in 2008, the Medienboard has supported several hundred games projects with well over 20 million euros, thereby making the capital region the largest ecosystem for the sector in Germany. Small and medium-sized enterprises have contributed significantly to this success, and we have made supporting them a particular priority on our agenda. However, as members of Die Linke, we see more than just the economic impact.

Games can bring social issues to life and open up new perspectives on political and cultural education.

In this way, Berlin's games industry also forms part of the multifaceted media metropolis that is Berlin, which we wish to further strengthen. VFX (visual effects) companies are part of the same technological ecosystem. We intend to continue our successful funding of these companies.

Cinemas, as cultural venues, are indispensable to Berlin. Berlin's programme, neighbourhood and arthouse cinemas, in particular, not only make an important contribution to the diversity of Berlin as a film city, but also to social inclusion. They make film culture accessible to all. As the Left, we want to strengthen and safeguard Berlin's cinema landscape in the long term. To this end, our aim is to make funding for cinemas as cultural venues a permanent feature of the state budget. We are also committed to ensuring that Berlin, as a film metropolis and home to numerous film cultural institutions, becomes more actively involved in the digitisation of its film heritage than it has been to date.

Independent press, independent journalism

Particularly in times of disinformation and hate speech, democracy needs a diverse and independent press. Yet even in Berlin, newspapers are coming under pressure, primarily due to the dominance of digital platforms. To safeguard journalistic diversity, we on the Berlin Left want to break new ground. Together with other federal states, Berlin should champion models of press funding that are open to innovation

that support media organisations serving the public good and new digital business models, without interfering with editorial independence.

Independent journalism is unthinkable without the commitment of active and critical journalists. SLAPPs – strategically deployed lawsuits brought by powerful actors or large corporations against journalists – are intended to weaken the democratic public sphere. Whilst those affected were long left to fend for themselves, the European Union’s Anti-SLAPP Directive does represent an improvement. However, its scope of application in Germany must be extended to cover domestic cases.

Violence against journalists has also increased. We are committed to ensuring that journalists can carry out their work safely.

Good work

A strong media landscape can only exist through good work. We are campaigning to ensure that work subject to social security contributions and compliance with collective agreements or comparable industry-standard remuneration and working models are further improved when public broadcasters award contracts and in film productions. Anyone receiving funding must pay fair fees, offer reliable working conditions and ensure transparency regarding employment structures.

The use of artificial intelligence is fundamentally changing work processes in the media. Without clear rules, however, it brings lead to an increased workload, a lack of transparency and fears of job losses. The Left is therefore committed to a people-centred use of AI based on clear rules, with strong worker participation. Artificial intelligence must neither displace decent work nor devalue creative or journalistic professions.

Working conditions and working time models should also be geared more towards ensuring a better balance with care and parenting responsibilities.

Equality and diversity

Even today, equality has still not been achieved in the media industry. We are committed to increasing the proportion of women not only at the top, but also across the board.

In order to represent and address our urban society appropriately, a wider range of life experiences, along with their respective sub-communities, must be reflected in the media landscape. We are committed to ensuring a diverse mix of professional groups involved, in line with the Diversity Charter.

Digital fundamental rights, independence and democratic oversight

Digital policy is a question of power. In Berlin, key administrative processes, specialist procedures and platform services continue to rely on systems provided by external suppliers. This creates structural dependencies and undermines democratic control. Digital independence means no structural ties to individual technology conglomerates, no privatisation of citizens' data and no 'black box' systems at the heart of state infrastructure. Digitalisation geared towards the common good is consistently focused on protecting informational self-determination.

Digital freedoms are non-negotiable. Measures such as state Trojans – that is, source telecommunications surveillance and online searches – enable access to entire IT systems. If security vulnerabilities are deliberately left open, a conflict arises between threat prevention and IT security as a whole.

In the case of government online services, tracking beyond what is technically necessary must be ruled out. The use of external tracking services leads to data outflows into uncontrollable structures. Administrative services must be accessible via the web, interoperable and based on open standards.

The State Data Protection Commissioner must be equipped to carry out regulatory and supervisory functions. She requires access to system architectures, documentation and contracts with IT service providers. Data stewards within the specialist departments document data flows and act as an interface between the specialist department, the Berlin IT Service Centre (ITDZ) and the data protection supervisory authority.

Democratic digitalisation of public administration and public infrastructure

In Berlin, there are numerous parallel digitalisation projects that are not sufficiently coordinated. This leads to duplication of development efforts, incompatible specialist procedures and the unnecessary tying up of resources. The 'Digital City Berlin' alliance must be reactivated as a cross-departmental coordination structure. It must be granted clearly defined decision-making powers to ensure that digitalisation projects do not run in parallel.

The management of digital projects must therefore be centrally documented, prioritised and made verifiable. This also includes transparent monitoring that shows how many of the citizen services are actually available digitally and what stage of development individual specialist procedures have reached.

Open and standardised interfaces, protocols and file formats are essential prerequisites for interoperability between specialist procedures. Without documented interfaces, closed, isolated solutions arise that cannot be reused. 'Openwashing' must be expressly prevented. Openness must be technically verifiable, in particular through accessible source code, reference implementations and documented interface descriptions. We are further developing the Open Data Strategy into a Linked Open Data Strategy and are continuing the pilot projects on machine-readable and linkable organisational chart and budget data.

The Berlin administration is to be gradually transitioned to open-source solutions. At the same time, active participation in existing

existing open-source projects must be facilitated, so that Berlin becomes not merely a user but a co-creator of digital infrastructure.

Key ITDZ products, such as the BerlinPC, must have a modular design and be easy to administer. The BerlinPC must be designed in such a way that components are interchangeable and interfaces are clearly documented. At the same time, a binding quality management system must be implemented within the ITDZ. Processes, system architectures and the components used must be documented transparently. The ICT architecture list must be made publicly available.

The procurement of externally developed software must be coordinated with other federal states. Individual procurements weaken the public sector's bargaining power. By pooling demand, it is possible to commission modular and reusable open-source solutions that benefit several states. This prevents parallel, isolated solutions and reduces long-term dependencies on individual suppliers.

The number of isolated specialist systems must be actively reduced. The current multitude of incompatible systems hinders standardisation and automation. The so-called 'technology zoo' must be phased out step by step.

Training for Linux system administrators must be specifically expanded. At the same time, liaison functions between specialist departments and IT must be structurally strengthened in order to formulate technical requirements precisely and avoid undesirable developments at an early stage.

LoRaWAN must be developed as an open wireless infrastructure. Freifunk must be promoted nationwide. Free Wifi Berlin must be further developed technically and secured for the long term. Digital infrastructure is part of public services and must not be left to commercial business models. The digitalisation of the electricity grid and associated control systems must be carried out transparently and in a manner that allows for oversight. Crisis resilience requires decentralised communication structures, such as the further development of the Kiezbox.

Social, inclusive and intergenerational digitalisation

Public administration services must be programmed to be technically accessible as a key requirement: this includes clear navigation and form structures, understandable language and alternative formats for content, e.g. for screen readers. Digital public administration must not exacerbate social inequality but must actively work to redress it.

No one should be forced to use digital services when accessing public services. In practice, such pressures arise, for example, when appointments can only be booked online or when analogue application procedures are only possible at considerable extra expense. Digital services can simplify processes, but must not replace analogue access channels until it is ensured that all sections of the population benefit equally.

At the same time, digital services must be functionally reliable. Confusing user interfaces, unstable appointment booking systems or incompatible devices cause frustration and undermine trust in state institutions. Quality and usability are therefore an integral part of socially just digitalisation.

Low-threshold digital access points in public spaces must be specifically expanded. Neighbourhood canteens with free Wi-Fi create places where digital participation is possible regardless of personal equipment. Libraries play an important role in this regard as places for advice and learning. They offer not only infrastructure but also support in using digital administrative services. Mobile citizens' centres complement this structure by providing services on site, thereby breaking down geographical barriers.

Data, smart city and platform policies geared towards the common good

The principle of 'Public Money, Public Code' means that software developed using public funds must be made openly accessible as source code

must be openly accessible, reusable and modifiable (open source). This applies in particular to specialist procedures, interface solutions and platform components developed on behalf of the State of Berlin. Open source enables independent security audits, facilitates reuse by other public authorities and prevents individual service providers from establishing permanent monopolies. Open source is therefore not merely a requirement for transparency, but a tool for structurally safeguarding the state's capacity to act.

Digital urban development must not be defined exclusively by technology providers or platform operators. Data interfaces, server structures and access rights must be transparently documented and subject to political oversight, following the model of the Mobility Data Specification. A smart city is only democratically legitimate if its technical foundations are transparent and verifiable.

This applies to market-dominant providers such as Airbnb, Booking and Freenow, whose business models have a significant impact on the housing market and mobility structures. Digital platforms often operate with their own data systems, pricing mechanisms and algorithmic controls, which are only partially transparent to public authorities. Regulation therefore also means establishing binding rules on data access, transparency obligations and interface requirements.

The taxi industry must be structurally integrated into local public transport to ensure uniform standards, fair competitive conditions and social protection. The platform economy must not lead to the fragmentation of public infrastructure. A Public Interest Innovation Fund totalling 20 million euros will provide targeted support for projects that develop open platform architectures, interoperable interfaces and business models geared towards the common good. This will help establish alternatives to purely market-oriented platform models. To reduce the dependence of the Berlin public on Big Tech platforms, we are making a Mastodon instance available free of charge and independently in the State of Berlin for public authorities, organisations and associations, following the example of other federal states and the federal level.

Sustainable digitalisation

Digital infrastructure results in significant energy and resource consumption. Data centres, server rooms, network infrastructure and data-intensive applications generate a constant demand for electricity, which continues to rise as digitalisation increases. In particular, cloud services, large databases and continuous synchronisation processes place a growing burden on server infrastructure. The energy consumption of software and data centres must therefore be systematically recorded and transparently documented. This also includes the disclosure of the location, cooling concept and energy source of the data centres in use.

Sustainability must be taken into account right from the system architecture stage.

The Blue Angel labels for software and data centres establish verifiable environmental standards. These cover not only hardware efficiency but also criteria for energy-efficient programming, sustainable server utilisation and transparent documentation of energy performance indicators. These environmental criteria must be made mandatory in procurement procedures.

When awarding IT contracts, energy efficiency, the lifespan of the hardware and the maintainability of the systems must be taken into account as decision-making criteria.

Repair cafés, a tailored repair incentive scheme and regulated sharing services extend the lifespan of digital devices. We support IT repair shops and repair cafés with project funding for networking, premises, tools, consumables and spare parts. In the public sector in particular, regular hardware replacements generate considerable amounts of electronic waste. A sustainable procurement policy must therefore prioritise reparability, the availability of spare parts and modular design. In the private sector, too, resource consumption can be reduced through the promotion of repairs and regulated sharing schemes.

Digital sustainability does not end with software, but encompasses the entire value chain of devices, network

infrastructure and data storage. Digital policy must therefore systematically take into account both product-related and consumption-related aspects.

Transparency, media policy and digital democracy

Transparency is a prerequisite for democratic oversight, but it does not arise solely from political declarations of intent. A transparency law for Berlin must provide for specific publication requirements, binding deadlines and machine-readable formats. Information must not merely be made available as scanned documents; it must be structured, searchable and technically processable. Open interfaces and standardised data formats are essential to enable civil society, academia and the media to scrutinise government action.

The principle of free access prevents social barriers to information. If access to information depends on the ability to pay, this effectively creates social selection. Digital publication platforms such as berlin.de must therefore be understood as a public information space and developed technically accordingly.

Obligations to remove content must be critically reviewed, particularly where content has been produced using public funds. Media libraries of publicly funded services should remain accessible in the long term, provided there are no legal grounds to the contrary. Technically, this means providing permanent archiving structures and stable storage solutions. Creative Commons licences without restrictive 'No Derivation' (NC) restrictions enable the legally compliant re-use and further processing of public content.

Whistleblowers help to expose structural abuses and must therefore be effectively protected. Protection means not only safeguards under employment law, but also technically secure reporting channels. Digital whistleblowing systems must be end-to-end encrypted and enable anonymous communication. Responsibilities for handling and protection must be clearly defined.

A media workshop for citizens creates spaces for an independent digital public sphere and supports civil society media production. Democratic participation requires not only legal opportunities, but also technical infrastructure and institutional backing.

Artificial intelligence, research and digital resilience

To promote the development and use of AI, the risk assessment set out in the AI Regulation must be consistently implemented.

AI in use must be traceable, and its results must be labelled as AI-generated. We do not want a security policy that exploits new technical possibilities, such as AI tools, to expand state surveillance and increasingly restrict people's privacy. We reject AI tools for remote biometric identification and for the analysis of personal data by third parties.

We will continue to develop public AI tools provided they offer measurable advantages over rule-based software; otherwise, easily reusable, modular open-source software should be developed. In doing so, the energy and resource consumption of AI solutions must also be critically assessed. Every AI application in the public sector must be transparent and subject to oversight; decisions must not be outsourced to 'black box' systems. Where there is a demonstrable benefit to the common good, we support AI models operated and trained by public authorities to meet specific needs, in order to minimise dependence on large corporations and to ensure data protection, decent work and the lowest possible energy consumption. In the provision of administrative services, we guarantee the right to information and advice from a real person within the administration.

To promote digital resilience, IT security in accordance with the NIS 2 Directive should prevent cyber-attacks against critical infrastructure. Security policy in the digital sphere must be designed to be preventative, defensive and in line with fundamental rights. We consistently reject offensive cyber-security policies such as 'hackbacks'.

18 Administration, Democracy, Districts

Berlin needs a more efficient administration

An administration that is citizen-focused, legally sound and efficient is essential for the capital. People on low incomes are particularly dependent on well-functioning state structures and are less able to defend themselves against administrative misconduct. Stakeholders in the economy too – from sole traders and small and medium-sized enterprises to large corporations – need clear structures and lines of responsibility. Particularly in these times of existential challenges, democracy must demonstrate that it can organise a functioning community. Despite the often difficult working conditions in the public sector, a great many staff members show tremendous commitment to their work, precisely because they recognise the importance of their work for the functioning of this city. We are grateful to them for this.

Our aim is for Berliners to be able to communicate with the authorities and government departments in a barrier-free, user-friendly and direct manner, whether in person or online. The administration must be equally accessible to everyone, and to this end we want to break down barriers and ensure access is free from discrimination.

Creating attractive working conditions within the public administration

Staff in local authorities and government departments face considerable public pressure and criticism from politicians and the media whilst carrying out their duties. Following a long period of staff cuts, many posts are now vacant. Retaining new, well-qualified staff is a major challenge, as a large proportion of the workforce will be retiring in the coming years.

Many administrative staff leave their jobs after just a few years to join the private sector or federal agencies, as the pay is better there. We will therefore implement the capital city allowance, which is already covered by collective agreements, for all staff; aim for a salary level in line with the average across all federal states; and, in addition, create permanent contracts and opportunities for promotion – in other words, secure working conditions and attractive career prospects within the civil service.

As an attractive employer, the public sector sets an example for the whole of Berlin. We want to see the conversion of fixed-term contracts to permanent ones and the creation of permanent posts.

The provision of flexible working time arrangements, the ability to balance work and family life, and the widest possible scope for working from home should be the norm. We will advocate to the Collective Bargaining Association of German States that the four-day or 30-hour working week, with full pay compensation, be explored for pilot projects in the public sector. Work shadowing schemes will be expanded, thereby promoting cooperation between different levels and authorities and fostering a modern, project-based and agile administrative culture. A fixed budget must be set aside for training and professional development within the administrations so that all staff can benefit from it. All responsibilities relating to human resources and training must be centralised within the Senate Department for Finance under the responsibility of a State Secretary in charge of human resources. In these challenging times, we cannot afford any friction or inefficiencies between the main administrative departments. As part of our business process optimisation, we will implement targeted organisational development and staff development planning, and put a stop to the haphazard cutting and creation of posts.

Improving working conditions, for example through collective agreements designed to ease the workload, presents financial challenges for organisations. We therefore wish to establish a ‘Good Work’ fund. Through this fund, organisations carrying out public tasks will be able to finance measures designed to secure or attract skilled workers. A prerequisite is that working conditions are demonstrably improved and that public services are thereby strengthened.

Strengthening training in the public sector

A key component in increasing the number of staff in the public sector is a training initiative. Organisations that provide their own training are better able to retain staff. To achieve this, it must become more attractive for staff to train the next generation, through greater relief from specialist tasks and more financial support to compensate for the dual workload.

We also need a Training LAB to explore the potential for a proactive modernisation of the administration and to develop practical solutions for the capital. The Training LAB will be established as an open administrative unit within the Senate Department for Finance and Personnel. Within the LAB, the administration will work alongside sections of the city's civil society, providers of public services, the business sector and academia to develop concrete solutions for attractive and future-oriented training. The Training LAB will act as a service provider and thought leader for the Berlin administration and for organisations and companies closely linked to the administration. As a central point of contact for training issues in public administration, it combines a think tank, a pilot laboratory and 'Best Matching' to form a unique hub, and is open to all relevant stakeholders for collaborative exchange and synergies.

We remain committed to ensuring that trainees are reliably taken on after completing their training, and to providing transparent career paths and development prospects. Trainees and candidates are provided with a full set of mobile devices. And we enable genuine co-determination, because young teams want to help shape processes. They can help reform the Berlin administration and promote new ways of working and approaches to problem-solving. We want to place particular emphasis on genuine appreciation of the work carried out and on a modern organisational and leadership culture.

We will make additional flats available for trainees in the administration through the municipal housing associations and adjust the rent levels in line with their remuneration. We want to press ahead with the construction of new trainee halls of residence on state-owned land.

Strengthening digitalisation, removing barriers

The comprehensive digitalisation of the administration not only significantly reduces the workload on staff but also minimises the burden on many citizens. A digitally-operated administration also enables flexible working models and provides a key building block for addressing the acute space shortage in Berlin's administration. To this end, the standardised BerlinPC must be the norm across the board for all staff. We are prioritising the accelerated digitalisation of business processes and citizen-focused services. Business process optimisation needs new impetus, and the expertise of academia, civil society and practitioners must be drawn upon – for example, at venues such as the CityLab. To this end, the administration's capacity to manage projects must be urgently strengthened. The organisation is not functionally designed to ensure the success of IT projects. The recurring errors in digitalisation projects must not be accepted as unavoidable hurdles, nor must they lead to a retreat from ambitious digitalisation projects, as was the case with the social welfare portal. We will ensure professional IT project management through organisational restructuring, in collaboration with the relevant Senate departments and the end-users at the operational level. The implementation of open standards and the 'once-only' principle can give digital administration a new boost and make it significantly easier for citizens too.

We want to modernise and ensure the long-term development of the service portal and the now-deactivated service app, through which citizens have direct access to administrative services. We intend to develop the city portal berlin.de, under municipal authority, into our city's central service, transparency and information platform, and to further modernise it with a focus on accessibility and multilingualism. Digital services must finally be accessible to EU citizens without a German identity card: the EU standard already exists.

The 15 most frequently requested services are to be digitised as a priority. In parallel with digitisation, we will work on streamlining administrative processes, which will also

benefit both individuals and urban society, for example through a reform of Berlin's grant legislation. We are also examining how the considerable effort involved in data requests from public authorities can be reduced, even though the data is often already available. To this end, we will swiftly make full use of the possibilities offered by the EUDI Wallet for the Berlin administration. We must finally achieve independence from non-European IT giants.

Needs-based funding for the boroughs

As part of the administrative reform, we have finally enshrined the principle of connectivity in the constitution, so that in future the boroughs will receive the necessary financial, human and spatial resources when they have to take on new responsibilities.

However, this does not yet resolve the fundamental problem of the districts being underfunded for their existing responsibilities. We want strong districts and a binding district policy. This can only be achieved by ensuring the districts' ability to act through a clear and fair distribution of resources, by fundamentally reforming the districts' funding system. Budgeting based on the business management tool of cost and performance accounting creates perverse incentives in terms of service planning and quality, thereby pitting the districts against one another in a zero-sum game. This offers no strategic perspective for a high-quality administration that is close to the citizens. In a new district funding system, the total allocation provided for in the constitution must be determined in a needs-based and transparent manner. As part of the reorganisation of district finances, factors such as the social situation,

demographic trends, general satisfaction and area-related factors be given greater weight in the allocation of funds. In this process, the Senate departments should limit themselves to coordinating activities and not dominate the boroughs. Supervision must be structured on a partnership basis, in a supportive and transparent manner, e.g. through target agreements on an equal footing and mutual feedback loops. However, in order to guarantee the needs-based funding of the boroughs in the long term, we do not rule out more comprehensive reforms, including constitutional amendments.

Strong boroughs and clear responsibility on the part of the Senate

The boroughs, with their administrations, borough offices and neighbourhood councils (BVVs), know their local areas best, along with the local stakeholders and residents. That is precisely why we need these strong boroughs, equipped with the necessary resources.

With the administrative reform, the Senate now finally has clear accountability towards the boroughs. To this end, the Senate now also has new management tools to facilitate better cooperation with the boroughs. We are committed to ensuring that the Berlin state government fulfils this responsibility in full.

We will campaign for better pay for public sector workers: poverty in old age amongst those in the lower pay brackets must be prevented. Now that Berlin has caught up with other federal states in terms of structural underpayment, we must overcome the disparities between the central administration and the boroughs. To ensure that the boroughs can fill their posts effectively, the inferior staffing levels and lower pay resulting from the current pay scale assessments must be brought to an end. To this end, we are establishing a unified pay assessment body within the Senate Department for Finance and Human Resources. By gradually harmonising the two collective agreements, TVL and TvöD, we also aim to end unequal treatment at university hospitals and other specialist departments.

Strengthening the administration's resilience to crises

A pragmatic structure and procedures are needed to address cross-agency issues during crises and conflicts. Cooperation is the number one prerequisite for a crisis-resilient city. To this end, a structure is to be established that enables the city to act effectively even in times of crisis. This structure requires trained staff, flexible spaces, communication facilities and clear responsibilities within the team. This must also be enshrined in law. The internal advisory unit at the Administrative Academy is to

support this effort, build a resilience team and review the current task force structures.

Strengthening participation and involvement as democratic instruments

Berliners are affected by decisions made by politicians and the administration. Resident participation must not be a mere simulation of democracy or pseudo-participation.

We will evaluate the implementation to date of the guidelines on citizen participation at the state level and in the boroughs, and lay down binding minimum standards for citizen participation in a Participation Act. This applies not only to urban development and new-build projects, but equally to transport infrastructure, traffic calming and a number of other issues. We want to make the State Advisory Council on Citizen Participation a public body and systematically link the results of its work to the House of Representatives, so that critical issues can be discussed publicly. The boroughs should also set up corresponding participatory advisory councils.

The digital participation platform mein.berlin.de is a good start and can be utilised even further to promote democratisation, enabling feedback, prioritisation and genuine co-determination by the public. At present, it is all too often the case that no participation takes place.

Where possible, the participation of those affected should be organised at district level and reach all groups of affected people. Multilingualism must become the norm in this regard. Active measures should be taken to take account of the differences in time and other resources available to different communities when facilitating their participation. Precisely because, as a rule, not everyone will be satisfied with the process and the outcome, transparent criteria and clear, democratically legitimate decision-making processes are indispensable. We will make the decisions of the district authorities and the Council of Mayors transparent online and create the legal framework to ensure that the public meetings of the district assemblies and their committees can also be followed and documented digitally.

We want Berliners to be able to propose their own projects directly and make their own decisions in participatory bodies regarding the use of public resources. Although there have been positive experiences with such participatory budgets in Lichtenberg and Marzahn-Hellersdorf, the procedures in the boroughs repeatedly reach their limits because many proposals concern matters at the state level; we therefore also wish to establish a Berlin-wide participatory budget at state level. Major cities such as Paris are already showing how this can be done. We want to discuss this idea, its potential implementation and the size of such a budget with the people of Berlin and develop it further together. The federal government's special fund also offers an opportunity for the people of Berlin to get involved.

Berlin in Europe and the European Union

Berlin continues to be characterised by its cosmopolitan nature as a European metropolis. As such, Berlin bears a key responsibility for integration, mutual understanding and the maintenance of diplomatic ties in Europe. Accordingly, as Berliners and members of the Left, we see it as our responsibility to fight with all our might against the division of the European Union caused by the rise of authoritarian and nationalist forces. We are therefore firmly committed to the idea of a united Europe based on solidarity, in which all people can live in peace, social security and individual freedom, and we want to make Berlin an example of what this can look like. With us, Berlin remains a bastion of cultural diversity, transnational cooperation and solidarity amongst and with the people of Europe.

As a network opposing the 'Fortress Europe' agenda, strengthening Solidarity Cities and places such as Berlin – which remain committed to openness to the world and humanity in their treatment of migrants and refugees, even outside the European Union – is equally of great importance. We want to break through the passivity in Berlin, deliberately brought about by the black-red Senate, in the Solidarity Cities network's pledges and turn them into action. Undocumented migrants cannot take out health insurance and are often confronted with structural difficulties in exercising their rights. We want

full social and healthcare provision and accommodation, regardless of residence status. We will use our powers as a federal state to make Berlin a safe haven

for people in need. This can be made possible through a Berlin City Card. It can also facilitate access to urgently needed language courses and participation in cultural life. Only in this way can we, regardless of future, potentially reactionary federal governments, continue to defend Berlin's core value of cosmopolitanism and ensure integration and inclusion. The implementation is to be worked out by a commission.

Advisory services for people living in the EU are of crucial importance, as they provide guidance, support and access to rights within what is often a complex legal and social environment.

Many face linguistic, bureaucratic or social barriers that are almost impossible to overcome without expert advice. It is therefore essential to strengthen existing advisory services specifically for them, in order to enable them to participate on an equal footing.

We intend to further expand our good cooperation with Polish local authorities and Polish civil society within the framework of the Oder Partnership. We will also continue to advocate for the continuation of the cultural train service between Berlin and Poland, with Warsaw as our next destination. We want to further develop our cooperation with cities such as Poznań, utilising cultural exchange programmes that bring democracy and diversity in Europe to life. We also wish to strengthen our relationships with other European capitals and learn from one another. Exchange between European cities in the fields of science and culture is essential if we are to overcome our shared challenges together. Whether it be social inclusion and equality, adapting cities to climate change and reducing emissions, or mobility, together we are always stronger

The challenges of the future that we must tackle require a European Union that stands united in solidarity.

19 Anti-discrimination, religious and ideological freedom

Countering structural and institutional discrimination; ensuring participation and diversity

We will step up the fight against all forms of racism and anti-Semitism, particularly those that are structurally and institutionally entrenched. We are committed to safeguarding this important work in the long term, independently of funding cycles. We regard the fight against racism and anti-Semitism as a cross-departmental task and intend to establish appropriate strategies and measures in all Senate departments, whilst making the necessary financial and human resources available.

Discrimination, racism and anti-Semitism are problems affecting society as a whole and occur in all social groups and milieus. Prevention work is therefore needed everywhere, alongside the identification of these issues and consistent action to combat them.

The entire public service of the State of Berlin is to be organised and trained with a focus on combating discrimination and grounded in human rights. This requires concrete organisational development strategies, including for the design of recruitment procedures, staff development processes, and for the acquisition, development and recognition of diversity competence. For all high-profile positions filled within the public service, particularly those of the Senate's contact persons, care must be taken to ensure that they possess expertise and awareness regarding discrimination in all areas, such as issues of racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, hostility towards the LGBTQ+ community and hostility towards people with disabilities.

We are committed to ensuring that studies on the extent of unreported racism, anti-Semitism and all other forms of discrimination are carried out. We want to safeguard the work of the monitoring bodies. In addition to determining so-called 'migration background', we want to promote the collection of data on experiences of racism and discrimination in Berlin, so that we can gain an overview of the experiences of Berliners and develop counterstrategies and measures. A standardised and transparent system is required for all data collection in the field of anti-discrimination.

We will strengthen all existing specialist bodies working to combat discrimination – for example, in the housing and labour markets and in the health sector – and their work must be secured on a long-term basis. We will draw up and implement a plan for the provision of Muslim cemeteries.

All current forms of racism and anti-Semitism, as well as Berlin's colonial legacy, must be an integral part of the initial and continuing training of teachers and other educational staff. Teaching materials and curricula must be geared towards this and systematically incorporate these topics.

AI systems must not reproduce or exacerbate existing discrimination, particularly in the labour or housing markets or within public administration. Those affected must have the right to human review, to be provided with reasons and the right to challenge automated decisions. That is why we advocate for human rights-based regulation and democratic oversight of artificial intelligence.

We want to strengthen the political, social and cultural participation of people with a migration background and those affected by discrimination, and create spaces for open dialogue and safe spaces. We promote empowerment work for all Berlin communities. In all legislative proposals and measures with a state-wide impact Strategies and approaches should aim to incorporate civil society's expertise through participatory processes.

Many non-governmental organisations, migrant self-help organisations, as well as projects and institutions promoting democracy and participation and combating discrimination and the far right, are dependent on funding cycles; they often operate in precarious circumstances and under uncertain conditions. Their structural and long-term funding must be safeguarded, amongst other things, through a Democracy Promotion Act. To this end, we wish to establish binding quality criteria, particularly with regard to anti-racist, anti-Semitic and intersectional approaches. At the same time, associations and NGOs must be protected from repression and the narrowing of spaces for discourse, so that they can continue their work independently, critically and effectively.

The State Anti-Discrimination Act is a pioneer at national level and strengthens protection against discrimination. We intend to evaluate it, develop it further and close any gaps in protection. It must be expanded to cover further grounds of discrimination such as residence status, nationality, care responsibilities or weight-based discrimination. We will strengthen the Ombudsman's Office in terms of its independence and staffing, and extend its powers. It should be granted the right to issue press releases and to take independent action. To raise awareness of the Act and the options available to challenge discrimination by public authorities, we will launch a wide-ranging information campaign.

We are strongly opposed to the state practice of racial profiling, which clearly contravenes the State Anti-Discrimination Act.

Furthermore, we are campaigning for a comprehensive amendment to the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) and will table a motion to this effect in the Bundesrat. We intend to close gaps in protection, including in the area of state action, and will base our approach on the demands of the 'AGG Reform – Now!' alliance.

Effectively combating anti-Semitism and racism

Anti-Semitic crimes and anti-Semitic ideology have risen sharply in recent years. We are committed to greater prevention and awareness-raising in all areas of society and

state institutions, and will strengthen projects that monitor incidents in this field, advise victims and carry out prevention work.

Combating and preventing anti-Semitism is a long-term task for society as a whole; therefore, it requires reliable and adequate funding for recognised and professionally qualified organisations, as well as the strengthening of dialogue and empowerment initiatives, rather than short-term, time-limited project funding. We want to expand anti-Semitism prevention and further develop relevant strategies, programmes and concepts in collaboration with experts and civil society. It is important to us that the work of organisations that adopt an intersectional approach and combine anti-Semitism-critical and anti-racism-critical approaches in their work is also strengthened.

The contact person for the State of Berlin on anti-Semitism must be provided with sufficient financial and human resources. Die Linke is committed to combating anti-Semitism effectively. We reject the political and media exploitation of allegations of anti-Semitism as a means of discrediting and defaming individuals or groups in political, social or professional contexts. We will promote research into structural and institutional anti-Semitism in Berlin.

Antiziganism and racism against Rom*nja and Sinti*zze remain part of everyday life; attacks and discrimination occur in all areas of life, particularly within public authorities, in the housing sector and in the labour market. We will develop a state programme to strengthen the participation of Romani and Sinti people and to combat anti-Gypsyism, and we will strengthen the role of the anti-Gypsyism liaison officer. The Advisory Board on Affairs relating to Romani and Sinti People must be granted sufficient powers to enable dialogue with the administration on an equal footing. The Federal Employment Agency's guidance document, entitled 'Combating organised benefit fraud by EU citizens' – which discriminates primarily against Roma* of Romanian and Bulgarian nationality and is also used in Berlin's job centres – must be abolished.

Anti-Muslim racism and anti-Muslim incidents have risen sharply in recent times. The far right, in particular, exploits anti-Muslim racism to normalise hatred and incitement against people with a migration background and refugees. Even democratic parties are now adopting anti-Muslim narratives, thereby contributing to the formation of prejudice, discrimination and criminalisation. We will develop and implement a cross-departmental strategy to combat anti-Muslim racism, which will also apply to the digital sphere. The point of contact for anti-Muslim racism must, like the Senate's other points of contact, also become a point of contact for Berlin and be provided with the necessary financial and human resources.

Projects combating anti-Palestinian racism must be supported. Restrictions on freedom of expression, academic freedom, freedom of assembly and other fundamental rights in the context of this specific form of racism must be researched in greater depth and countered.

Anti-Black racism and incidents motivated by it have been on the rise for years. We will scrutinise all institutions, in particular the police and their databases, from an anti-discrimination perspective and put an end to discriminatory practices and structures. The UN Decade for People of African Descent has been extended; the State of Berlin must also live up to this. We intend to strengthen the committee based within the Anti-Discrimination Administration: to ensure dialogue on an equal footing and a successful cross-departmental comprehensive cross-departmental fight against anti-Black racism, it must be granted full powers and access to documents from the Senate. We are also committed to ensuring that content on the city's colonial history is taught as a compulsory subject in schools and that Intersectional Black European Studies is once again represented within Berlin's academic landscape.

We advocate for a comprehensive reappraisal and institutional recognition of anti-Asian racism. Experiences of racism must no longer be marginalised or ignored, but must be systematically embedded in education, the culture of remembrance and public administration. This includes the mandatory integration of Asian migration histories into school and

university curricula, as well as a critical examination of Germany's colonial history in the Asia-Pacific region.

We will consistently address anti-Slavic racism and resolutely oppose it. Anti-Slavic stereotypes have a long historical tradition; these continuities must be systematically addressed. Intersectional perspectives on anti-Slavic racism – for example, in conjunction with classism, anti-Gypsyism, anti-Semitism or religious discrimination – should be embedded in research, education and public administration.

Specific racism against Kurdish people must also be researched more thoroughly, combated and raised awareness of. We will support projects that carry out this work.

Defending freedom of religion and belief

The protection and visibility of Jewish, Muslim, Alevi and Christian life are central to us, as is freedom of belief. We want to strengthen their self-representation and ensure that all communities are recognised as a natural part of our migrant society. We want to recognise and honour all their religious holidays in public institutions and enable them to carry out their funeral rites in Berlin. The self-determination of members of other religions must also be safeguarded and supported. No one in Berlin should be threatened or defamed because of their personal background, religion or beliefs – whether they wear a cross or a kippah, speak Hebrew, are an Arab* Berliner or are an atheist.

For the political right, the response to this religious and ideological diversity is the call for a 'dominant culture' or the defence of what it calls the 'West' – against a supposed 'East'. It does not ask how we can deal with plurality and develop society, but rather excludes people with its responses and shuts down spaces for discussion. This new plurality must be defended against the political right and shaped in a spirit of democracy and solidarity. Tolerance is more than mere coexistence; it must lead to recognition.

Since the state is constitutionally open to all religions and worldviews, it must also respect, protect and foster pluralism. There is no justification for granting privileged status to the Christian churches. We welcome the revival of Jewish life in Germany after 1945 and, above all, after 1990. Islamic communities, as well as other religions and communities of belief, must also be able to occupy a position of equal standing alongside the Christian churches, Jewish religious communities and the Humanist Association of Berlin-Brandenburg.

We call on the Senate to introduce religiously neutral pastoral carers in hospitals, prisons, the police force and the fire service for people of no religious affiliation, as a complement to religious pastoral carers. Muslim pastoral care must be available not only in prisons but also in other institutions. At federal level, we advocate that all chaplains be granted the right to refuse to give evidence under Section 53(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (StPO), given the special relationship of trust involved. We call for the establishment of a chair for the training of teachers for Alevi religious education and Alevi clergy.

We oppose all forms of religious fundamentalism, some of which are based on ideologies of inequality. We stand against the threats made against Iranian activists by supporters of the Islamist Iranian regime, as well as, more broadly, the threats to people and attacks on institutions and organisations that campaign for democracy and human rights by Islamist actors. In addition to taking consistent action, there is a need for greater promotion of prevention across all areas of society and in all institutions.

20 Refugees and Migration

A diverse, united urban community

Berlin has always been shaped by various waves of immigration and refugee movements. People from the so-called 'guest worker' generation, contract workers in the GDR, refugees and migrants have helped to build Berlin and continue to shape it to this day. It is this diversity that makes Berlin such a wonderful and lovable place to live. As members of the Left, we defend this open and diverse society, as well as the right to seek refuge and to migrate. We want all Berliners to have the same rights, regardless of whether they were born here, have lived here for years or have only recently arrived. We will continue to campaign for this.

We will continue to work closely, on an equal footing, with people with a migration background, refugees and their self-representative organisations, as well as support organisations and other professional associations, to improve their living conditions in Berlin. We are also committed to ensuring that the existing opportunities for migrant self-help organisations and self-representative bodies to participate in politics, public administration and the economy are expanded and strengthened. This, too, contributes to the further democratisation of institutions and society.

Migration and Refugees

Our aim is a fundamental shift in policy – towards global freedom of movement, equal rights for all and a society based on solidarity with migrants.

Our guiding principle is that all people, including refugees, should be able to lead self-determined lives. This means that they have equal access to housing, healthcare, education, work and social benefits, to culture and all areas of social life. We will work to remove the relevant barriers. In doing so, we are pursuing a human rights-based approach to combat any form of utilitarian racism that categorises people according to their usefulness

to the German economy. This also includes supporting children and young people with a history of migration or displacement. Youth work must be given greater consideration as a priority in its own right, particularly through empowerment initiatives, political education, the prevention of online violence, and diversity management within youth organisations and open child and youth work facilities.

We will introduce a municipal ID card (modelled on the NY City ID in New York and the Zurich ID) for all Berliners to improve access to resources for undocumented people. The City ID should be designed in such a way that it also provides a solution to the problem faced by those – often migrant – individuals who, due to the lack of affordable housing in Berlin, have no choice but to live in sublet or sub-tenancy arrangements without registering their place of residence. This is because people without papers or with an uncertain residence status – refugees, those criminalised for being undocumented, or the homeless – not only live in constant fear of identity checks, but also have virtually no access to municipal resources.

Equal rights for all

We want all people affected by political decisions to have a say in them. The fact that over a quarter of Berliners are not allowed to vote in local elections and elections to the House of Representatives, nor stand for election, represents a major democratic deficit. We therefore intend to exhaust all options under state law in Berlin to introduce the right to stand for election and the right to vote for all Berliners, regardless of their passport, after a maximum of five years' residence in Germany.

Furthermore, we will continue to campaign at all levels to secure the right to vote for people without German citizenship.

As many rights depend on citizenship, the barriers must be removed. Naturalisation must be made possible regardless of income and without degrading naturalisation and language tests. We will therefore make use of all the

, including exceptions and provisions for cases of hardship, to facilitate more naturalisations and to ensure that the State Office for Immigration operates in a manner that is sensitive to discrimination. In addition to digital applications, non-digital applications must also be made available in the interests of accessibility, and the backlog of naturalisation applications must be cleared. The advisory services at the Welcome Centre must be strengthened; in addition to advice on migration law, there is an urgent need to increase staffing levels for advice on naturalisation law. Furthermore, it must be ensured that naturalisation is not misused as a means of repression against those who are politically active.

Berlin's administration does not reflect the city's population; in particular, it does not represent people with a migration background, who now account for over 40 per cent of Berlin's population. To ensure equal opportunities, we intend to further develop the Participation Act and, by introducing a binding recruitment quota, ensure that people with a migration background are recruited and promoted where they are equally qualified and under-represented. Close monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the support plans under the Participation Act within the migrant community will be ensured. Furthermore, in line with the arrangements for women's representation, there must also be representative bodies for employees with a migrant background in the public sector, which are equipped with the powers, staff and resources necessary to fulfil their duties.

We will campaign, through a Bundesrat initiative, to ensure that residence status is made independent of employment contracts.

The State Advisory Council for Participation must be strengthened in terms of its independence and its scope for influence; it needs greater powers, the right to inspect administrative documents, and a right to information, so as to enable dialogue between the council members and the administration. The council's decisions must be taken into account and reflected in administrative action. The district advisory councils must also be strengthened. The framework conditions for cooperation between the district offices and the respective advisory councils should be standardised by establishing mandatory standards for participation processes across all authorities.

At the federal level, we will continue to campaign for the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act to be abolished as a special law, and for all people to receive the same benefits necessary to meet their basic needs, regardless of their residence status. Single refugees in shared accommodation should receive the full rate of benefits, not just the partner rate. EU citizens who are not in employment need access to social assistance. Furthermore, we will not introduce the discriminatory payment card, or will abolish it if it is already in place.

Creating prospects for staying

The best protection against exclusion, discrimination and criminalisation is the right to remain; we will therefore campaign for a cut-off date regulation that enables the nationwide legalisation of people without prospects of remaining, because every deportation is one too many. We will therefore also press for the extension of the right of residence based on opportunity, in order to end the misery caused by successive temporary tolerations.

Furthermore, we will make use of all the scope afforded by state law to grant people the right to remain. We categorically reject all forms of detention or restrictions on the movement of refugees, as well as family separations. It is absolutely clear to us that no one should be deported, particularly not to war zones or crisis areas. This also means making use of the options available under state law to impose temporary deportation halts. We wish to bring about a paradigm shift towards greater humanity in refugee policy.

For at present, even in Berlin, it is a harsh reality that people are forcibly deported – often after years of residence – thereby separating families.

Furthermore, we want to grant a right of residence to victims of right-wing violence and hate crime. In view of Germany's historical responsibility towards the Sinti* and Rom*nja communities, Berlin must advocate for a nationwide humanitarian right of residence scheme for Rom*nja from third countries and utilise every possible means to grant members of this group a humanitarian right of residence.

We wish to lower the barriers to granting a residence permit independent of marital status to women affected by violence.

For Berlin to live up to its claim of being a safe haven, it must take in people in need. This includes, amongst others, relatives of Berliners whose safety is at risk due to armed conflicts. We therefore wish to establish state-level resettlement programmes, particularly for people from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Gaza and Lebanon; in particular, vulnerable individuals must be given the opportunity to enter Berlin via such a safe route of escape and find protection.

Where the requirements relating to a minimum standard of living, the passport requirement and language proficiency are concerned, every scope for interpretation must be utilised. The same applies to family reunification. Unreasonable retrospective visa procedures should be avoided. To ensure that the Residence Act is implemented in Berlin in a manner consistent with humanitarian principles and human rights, the VAB (Procedural Guidelines on Residence in Berlin) should be revised in collaboration with refugee organisations, their support networks and the participatory advisory boards.

The Hardship Commission must be structured in such a way that as many people as possible are given the prospect of remaining in the country. Its staffing levels must be increased, and its members must receive training to raise awareness of discrimination.

In future, the State Office for Immigration should no longer fall under the legal and technical supervision of the Senate Department for the Interior, as this favours a security-based approach to asylum and migration. Instead, a humanitarian and socio-political approach must be ensured.

Those in particular need of protection

For many years, we in Berlin have been campaigning to ensure that refugees in particular need of protection are admitted and find protection here. This includes, in particular, women, children and young people, traumatised individuals, LGBTIQ+ people, as well as religious and ethnic minorities who have had to flee their countries to escape persecution, torture, sexual assault and the risk of being killed.

The entitlements to benefits and legal rights that result from this must be consistently implemented in practice. To this end, the standard support system – particularly in the health sector – must not only recognise what these people urgently need, but also meet those needs.

Those in particular need of protection must be identified from day one and receive support. We remain committed to strengthening the support and counselling provided to refugees in particular need of protection, and we want authorities and government departments to involve the specialist centres of the Berlin Network for Refugees in Particular Need of Protection more closely than before in their processes and to recognise the protection certificates issued by these centres.

Access to work and training, as well as to education and healthcare

We remain committed to ensuring that refugees, regardless of their residence status, have equal access to work and training, regardless of their residence status. Berlin offers a wide range of advisory and support services, which must be maintained.

However, we also need further measures to ensure that refugees have the security they need to enter the labour market. The ‘training tolerance’ status must therefore be further developed and extended to include further training programmes, language courses, work placements or part-time employment. This will give refugees the time to seek out a training programme that matches their personal strengths and abilities. The range of free language courses, particularly those tailored to specific professions, must be expanded and their quality further improved.

The work of integration advisers, who assist with access to resources, must be safeguarded.

There is a need in all districts for drop-in centres offering advice on asylum, residence and naturalisation law, as well as sufficient provision for psychosocial support and counselling tailored to specific countries of origin.

In particular, we want to strengthen the work of the psychosocial centres, which provide vital therapeutic support for refugees, and, in the long term, ensure they receive regular funding. A city-wide

structure for language mediation across all relevant sectors, and existing structures – such as those in the health sector – should be expanded.

Migrants, and above all undocumented migrants, are particularly vulnerable to falling into human trafficking networks. Here, counselling services must be expanded and measures taken to ensure that people do not end up in illegal and exploitative working conditions through unscrupulous recruitment agencies.

Refugees have a right to equal access to the healthcare system as the rest of Berlin's population. Refugees must not be denied benefits because the division of responsibilities between authorities is unclear or because they are unable to register with a health insurance fund.

Access to early years education and schooling must also be guaranteed for refugee children. We oppose segregated schools for refugees and ensure that children are enrolled in mainstream schools, so that they can participate fully and settle into life in Berlin.

Furthermore, youth work and school social work that tackle discrimination must be structurally strengthened in order to counteract racism, exclusion and digital violence at an early stage.

-> see chapter '10 Education' on page 152

The clearing house, which supports people who fall through the cracks of the standard system either temporarily or permanently, must be strengthened. Low-threshold, non-discriminatory access to healthcare must not depend on residence status, regardless of whether it concerns emergency care or the treatment of chronic conditions. Furthermore, there is a need for more open exercise programmes that are accessible free of charge and free from discrimination.

-> see chapter '08 Health and Care' on page 127

Access to housing for refugees instead of mass accommodation

We want a refugee policy that focuses on social inclusion and the prospect of settling here from the very outset, thereby counteracting exclusion and stigmatisation. This means that refugees should not be forced to live in inhumane, isolated mass accommodation, and that children should not be taught at segregated schools for refugees (Ü 1.7420 LAG Bildung)

rather than in mainstream schools. They must have access to housing and, on a transitional basis, to decentralised accommodation that upholds human rights standards. Inhumane mass accommodation facilities that fail to meet standards and allow no privacy whatsoever for people and families – some of whom are severely traumatised – such as the facility in Tegel, must be closed down, and the people must be rehoused more appropriately or granted access to housing.

Access to housing

Our plans to return temporary and furnished flats to the regular housing market, to take action against rent gouging and the misuse of property, to socialise large property portfolios, and to introduce measures to regulate rents will benefit all Berliners, including refugees.

We want to significantly increase the quotas for rent- and occupancy-controlled letting and establish higher allocations for homeless people, many of whom are refugees. As there is a shortage of affordable housing, we need binding and higher allocation quotas for the letting of new and re-let state-owned flats and for publicly subsidised flats to people who hold a housing eligibility certificate.

Furthermore, 10 per cent of state-owned and publicly subsidised flats that are newly let or re-let should be specifically allocated to people affected by homelessness under rent- and occupancy-controlled tenancies. We will expand the protected housing market.

The housing eligibility certificate (WBS) is to be extended to all groups of refugees, regardless of the validity period of their residence permit

. Furthermore, through cooperation agreements between state-owned housing associations, the state and the boroughs, we aim to help more people move from refugee accommodation into their own homes. Corresponding pilot projects, such as the 'Wohnen statt MUF' initiative in Marzahn, are to be expanded. We also intend to support projects that facilitate access for refugees to co-operative housing. Through a solidarity fund, we will enable refugees and homeless people to move into existing or newly built flats owned by housing co-operatives. The Housing Implementation Regulations (AV Wohnen) must be amended so that people can also rent a flat if the rent is lower than the cost of accommodation in shared accommodation.

We also want to expand and promote decentralised specialist advice centres across Berlin to support refugees in their search for accommodation, regardless of their residence status.

Minimum standards for temporary accommodation

A new state agency for social housing should, in future, create accommodation options and housing for refugees, the homeless and those without a home. This will make it more difficult for private, profit-driven companies to operate refugee accommodation facilities.

A Social Accommodation Act is intended to ensure that statutory minimum standards for refugee and ASOG accommodation are safeguarded and regularly monitored in future (including, amongst other things, minimum standards for facilities and staffing levels, infrastructure grants for the districts per person accommodated, parliamentary declaration of an accommodation emergency, and provisions defining the nature and duration of emergency accommodation).

-> see chapter '07 Social Affairs and Inclusion' on page 112

Each district will also be obliged to make land or properties available for shared accommodation. If the districts fail to fulfil their responsibilities adequately, the Senate must

, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, set criteria and determine the number of accommodation places that each district must provide, and ensure that these are implemented. Shared accommodation must be planned in such a way that any missing infrastructure for the district and neighbourhood – such as schools, nurseries, community centres and meeting places, as well as links to local public transport – is developed.

We support the vital work of all volunteers and neighbourhood projects around accommodation centres.

Furthermore, additional vacant hotels, hostels, office spaces and accommodation with spare capacity must be made available for temporary use. To ensure that the contribution towards costs made by refugees is reasonable, cost caps must be set to guarantee that accommodation costs do not exceed the level of comparable public or charitable accommodation.

Even decentralised accommodation, as a transitional model, must uphold human rights standards. We want to increase the ratio of social workers and psychological support staff in all accommodation facilities. There is a need for more needs-based accommodation and single-occupancy rooms for all vulnerable groups of refugees, such as queer refugees, families and women*, as well as people with chronic illnesses and disabilities.

There must be sufficient places in accessible accommodation, and greater consideration must be given to the needs of the residents. Accommodation must enable residents to lead self-determined lives; for this reason, accommodation with an apartment-style structure should be prioritised over other forms of accommodation.

All accommodation must have child protection and anti-violence policies in place. Such policies must be further developed in collaboration with refugee organisations and social welfare organisations.

We are lifting the obligation to live in a reception centre whilst the asylum procedure is ongoing. This will enable us to convert all reception centres into shared accommodation with their own catering facilities and communal spaces.

The Berlin Independent Complaints Bureau offers refugees housed in LAF (State Office for Refugee Affairs) accommodation the opportunity to report grievances regarding their accommodation or the provision of benefits, including anonymously. We also want the independent complaints office to extend its remit to include the accommodation provided by the boroughs for homeless people, which is to be allocated as part of the city-wide coordination scheme.

We want staff employed in accommodation for refugees and the homeless to receive pay in line with collective agreements and to have permanent, secure employment contracts. A collective agreement for the sector is a prerequisite for this, and we will campaign for its conclusion.

We want the awarding of contracts for the operation of accommodation to be based primarily on quality standards and to be awarded to organisations that work in the public interest rather than for profit. To this end, it is important in the long term to establish a social enterprise in cooperation with social organisations (e.g. LIGA), which will bring accommodation provision under municipal control.

Furthermore, we call on the federal government to provide a per-person allowance to cover accommodation costs and to enable greater investment in improving access to housing for marginalised groups. The federal government must not leave the federal states and local authorities to bear the costs alone. Germany has a duty under constitutional, European and international law to provide reception, which is why the federal government bears responsibility in this area.

21 Innsrssi

The Left has a broader understanding of security than other parties. We want to tackle the root causes and find social solutions to social problems. Many of the measures relevant to creating security do not fall within the remit of home affairs and justice policy, but rather other policy areas, such as a progressive drugs policy, youth (social) work, social security and the fight against homelessness, prevention and counselling in the fight against racism and right-wing violence, or the fight against domestic violence and violence against women within the sphere of feminist policy.

In the field of home affairs and justice, one thing is clear to us: a fact-based policy for greater safety in the city, whilst simultaneously strengthening citizens' rights, is possible. This is what we stand for. We do not want authoritarian window-dressing through a constant stream of new laws, powers and pointless restrictions on fundamental rights; instead, we want to tackle the social causes of crime, improve the work of the security authorities, expand prevention efforts, build closer ties with the public and set the right priorities. We stand for greater democratic oversight of the security authorities and want to scrutinise their powers.

Data Protection/Freedom of Information

We want to strengthen the rights and powers of Berlin's Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information. She must be granted genuine authority to issue orders to public authorities and effective tools to enforce them. To prevent data protection breaches at an early stage, data protection and data protection oversight must be given greater priority within public authorities.

Against the backdrop of unauthorised data access, particularly by the police, we intend to review both the necessity of data storage and the access authorisations for administrative databases from a discrimination-critical perspective. The Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information should be allocated more resources for advisory services and enforcement. We also wish to strengthen the rights of data protection officers

across state authorities and state-owned enterprises. We oppose plans to further centralise data protection supervision at federal level, thereby weakening the state data protection commissioners.

We want to replace Berlin's Freedom of Information Act with a new law based on civil society proposals for a transparency act. In doing so, we will dispense with sector-specific exemptions and take into account state action carried out through private-sector organisational structures, such as state-owned enterprises. The protection of critical infrastructure must not serve as a pretext for restricting the right to freedom of information.

Tackling digital violence effectively

Offences relating to digital violence often remain a legal grey area and uncharted territory for criminal justice. We want to establish centres of technical expertise to support advice centres, women's refuges and consumers in the areas of counselling, further training and forensics in cases of digital violence, as well as generally in the field of IT security. In addition to expanding protection and therapy services for victims, we call for a training and awareness-raising campaign within Berlin's security authorities. This should include compulsory further training for the police and the judiciary, as well as the formation of specialist units within the State Criminal Police Office (LKA) and specialist departments within the Public Prosecutor's Office.

To protect against deepfakes, we call for strict legal regulations against the creation and dissemination of AI-generated sexualised content produced without the consent of those affected.

Strengthening prevention

Social justice and preventative work tailored to people's specific needs form the basis for a safe Berlin. The concept of security must not be guided by police criteria, but must instead focus on tackling the social causes of insecurity. This must also be reflected in the allocation of financial resources. We want to put a stop to the ever-increasing, costly

police build-up and reallocate the funds. Police operations – for example, at demonstrations, during random checks at nightclubs and in weapon-free zones, or at football matches – are labour-intensive and often ineffective. We will examine how we can adjust police staffing levels to match those of other city-states, plus any additional requirements arising from the capital's status as stipulated in the Capital Financing Agreement. The funds thus freed up will instead be used to finance posts in emergency and crisis services, street social work and so on.

Wherever possible, policing must be replaced by social work, or at the very least supplemented by it. It is well known that costly symbolic policies in the form of fences and CCTV cameras restrict civil liberties but offer no added value. They do not prevent crime, but merely displace it. To ensure safety in neighbourhoods, local authorities must be strengthened so that they can develop and implement holistic safety and development strategies, tailored to specific local issues, in collaboration with residents. This requires not only people-centred urban planning, but also the expansion of neighbourhood-based violence and crime prevention at the local authority level. Equally important is, amongst other things, the expansion of street-based social work, the work of park patrols and effective youth social work projects. We want to ensure adequate and reliable funding for this. The feminist perspective on security policy must be strengthened.

The fence around Görlitzer Park is emblematic of an authoritarian policy of symbolism that does not solve problems but merely suppresses them. This must come to an end. Instead of wasting valuable resources on enforcing the night-time closure of the park against the wishes of local residents, we want to allocate funds to genuine solutions to social problems: outreach social work, support for the homeless and those struggling with addiction, and park patrols who, through direct dialogue, promote mutual consideration.

In Berlin, the incidence of hate-motivated violence is on the rise. To prevent this effectively and at an early stage, we need to strengthen the state programme for the prevention of radicalisation and deradicalisation. In this regard, particular attention must be paid to the ideological escalation within far-right and neo-Nazi structures, as these pose the greatest

potential for violence. Teachers in particular, as well as staff at youth centres and sports clubs, need more support from civil society organisations. Victims of hate-motivated violence must be better supported and, where necessary, receive financial assistance without red tape. We want to expand the fund set aside for this purpose. Attacks on homeless people should in future be recorded as hate crimes. Long-term funding for work with perpetrators must be secured. We want to expand the violence protection clinic.

Democratising the police

The police are the only institution authorised to use force to protect life and limb, personal freedom and property. It is not blind trust that legitimises their actions, but laws and democratic oversight.

Police violence requires independent investigation and countermeasures. It is evident that an ever-increasing police presence does not lead to greater safety. We take the safety of Berliners very seriously. That is why, together with experts from academia and civil society (including the abolitionist movement, amongst others), we want to develop long-term measures that will ensure genuine safety for the people of this city. We want to implement such measures (including alternative approaches to public safety, such as specialised, multi-professional teams, which may take on and complement the tasks of the police (including averting danger and intervening in specific situations to protect life and health in acute emergencies). There is a need to reallocate public funds in favour of social work and prevention. When reallocating funds to social professions, we take into account 'Critical Social Work' and other research by experts who analyse the role of social work and social professions.

Where neighbours know one another, solidarity and safety become a tangible reality. People who know who their neighbours are will step in when help is needed. On the one hand, this prevents violence before it is too late, because people stick together right from the start of difficult life situations and, for example, work together to find a place in therapy. On the other hand, people are more likely to help in acute situations if they know one another.

Petty crime, in particular, is politically driven and is not tackled simply by having more police, but by overcoming poverty and social hardship. In the case of violent offences, too, it is evident that social prevention, safe spaces and working with perpetrators and victims are more effective at preventing violence than state repression.

We therefore wish to expand the institution of the Police and Ombudsman, strengthen its powers and staffing, and ensure an active and open dialogue between the Ombudsman, Parliament and civil society. Access to police files and data, in particular bodycam recordings, must be guaranteed by law.

The Police Ombudsman must have the necessary investigative powers to shed light on unlawful violence and human rights violations committed by the security authorities. We want the legal situation to be clarified so that any *citizen* is permitted to film police operations. In this way, we will create greater democratic oversight and strengthen civil society's capacity for action.

Members of the public should be able to request that body cameras be switched on and view the recordings. Police officers should be required to inform people of this right at the start of any police operation. When weapons are used, the bodycam must be triggered automatically. So-called 'crime-prone areas' and 'weapons-free zones' are linked to additional police powers, such as CCTV surveillance or random checks, and thus provide a gateway for racial profiling and discriminatory police conduct. We want to abolish them.

The police must be required to state in writing the reason and the legal basis for every identity check and search (check receipts). Furthermore, we want to phase out additional police units, such as the 'hotspot' and 'visibility' units, in these areas and invest the funds thus freed up in social infrastructure. We want to strengthen independent research into the police. The police's capacity for self-criticism and a culture of accountability must be improved. We support civil society initiatives and advice centres, such as e.g. the 'Campaign for Victims of Racist Police Violence' (KOP), which monitor police conduct and draw attention to racist practices. We will actively expose and combat these discriminatory practices.

We want to restrict the surveillance powers of the police and the domestic intelligence service, the Verfassungsschutz; we do not wish to support any new powers. The security loopholes that are often left open for the surveillance of telephones and computers pose a threat to society.

We firmly reject state Trojans. We fundamentally oppose biometric matching against publicly accessible data, as well as the use of AI-supported analytical tools in police databases, such as those developed and supplied by Palantir, for example. Citizens' data is not a plaything. We want to strengthen data protection oversight of police data management, particularly in view of the nationwide standardisation and interlinking of police data processing. Citizens should be able to find out more easily what data has been collected about them, by what means, and by whom and for what purpose it has been accessed.

Initial experience with the 'Taser' shows that this painful device, when in the hands of the police, does not lead to a reduction in the use of firearms. Furthermore, there are enormous risks not only for the citizens affected, but also for the officers themselves. We oppose the use of Tasers outside of special forces.

Instead, we want to strengthen skills in dealing with people in exceptional mental health situations. This concerns the initial and in-service training of police officers, but above all the strengthening of non-police resources in crisis intervention, including through the establishment of multi-professional intervention teams that are not part of the police force and are linked to the emergency call centres. These teams should work closely with the districts' social psychiatric services, be able to identify risks and intervene at an early stage.

The central detention centre currently fails to meet human rights standards. We want to ensure humane accommodation here through appropriate modernisation. We want to explore alternatives to generally reduce the number of people held in custody in places of detention.

To improve the work of the authorities in the field of politically motivated crime, we intend to use the findings of previous investigations—

investigative committees into the NSU, the Breitscheidplatz attack and the series of attacks in Neukölln. In particular, it must be possible to link the documentation of police work – through statistical records of case progression – to the outcomes of the subsequent criminal proceedings, and to ensure this is verifiable. We reject the ‘1,000 pinpricks’ strategy, whereby migrant business owners are subjected to business inspections on the basis of general suspicion, involving the deployment of a massive police presence. Inspections by the public order office or customs must not be misused as a pretext for police investigative measures simply because there are no judicial search warrants. We are firmly opposed to the latest reform of the General Security and Public Order Act (ASOG), which drastically encroaches on the lives of people in Berlin through biometric and AI-supported surveillance. We will take action against it using all legal and political means and subject the ASOG as a whole to a revision that is grounded in human dignity and sensitive to issues of discrimination.

Improving working conditions for the police, fire service and prison service

Die Linke is committed to ensuring that working conditions within the police and fire services are sustainably improved. The State of Berlin must offer ‘good work’ in the public sector in order to be an attractive employer. This also includes clearly limiting overtime for service personnel and permitting it only in the event of exceptional staff shortages. We aim to achieve this in particular by adapting operational plans for the protection of public gatherings or fan gatherings.

The organisational structures within the police and fire services should be evaluated and duplicate structures eliminated. The entry-level rank in the fire service should be raised. The training of operational and rescue personnel should be modernised and enriched with education on general politics and fundamental rights.

Sustainable psychological support for emergency services personnel, including professional supervision, must be guaranteed. This is necessary to enable emergency and rescue

and to protect their mental health. Police medical care must be expanded. Post-traumatic stress disorder must be recognised as a consequence of a work-related accident. Violence against public sector employees is unacceptable.

De-escalation strategies at public gatherings also protect staff and must be consistently implemented. Police and fire service buildings must be renovated and repaired more swiftly. We aim to increase the proportion of women and promote diversity, particularly within the fire service.

Strengthening police training in Berlin – safeguarding academic freedom and democratic professionalism

The Left is committed to preserving the Berlin model of police training. It combines practical police training with academic qualifications, the ability to reflect on society and professionalism grounded in fundamental rights. We reject plans to remove the training of senior police officers from the University of Applied Sciences for Economics and Law (HWR) and place it entirely under the authority of a police academy supervised by the Interior Administration. Instead, we advocate strengthening police training for senior officers at the HWR rather than at the police academy. The focus must be on training officers to be responsible, reflective and democratic – not on a one-sided security policy paradigm.

At the same time, we recognise that the continuous development of police training and further education is necessary. This includes regular, independent academic evaluations that ensure transparency and academic quality and are subject to democratic scrutiny.

Protecting and expanding the right of assembly

Improvements have been achieved through the Freedom of Assembly Act, which we helped to develop. We will improve the Act and its practical implementation by the Berlin authorities, taking

the evaluation carried out by the HWR. Civil society organisations and academic findings will be taken into account in this process.

Freedom of assembly must be better protected against state restrictions. Both the consideration of irrelevant factors when restricting assemblies (e.g. bans on certain languages) and the deterrent effect of individual police measures must be prevented. We condemn police violence and disproportionate restrictions on freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, such as those recently experienced by, for example, demonstrations in solidarity with Palestine or climate activists. The routes to and from an assembly, as well as facilities associated with the assembly, are also protected under the freedom of assembly. We want to completely abolish the ban on face coverings and 'defensive weapons'. Legal protection against measures restricting the right of assembly must be guaranteed, in particular through the timely notification of conditions. We reject the police practice of using painful restraints on the grounds that it is incompatible with the prohibition of torture. We want to separate the assembly authority from the Berlin Police.

Fans' rights at sporting and football events

We advocate for the expansion of citizens' and supporters' rights regarding access to sporting and football events. Attending sporting events in general – and football matches in particular – is a safe experience in Berlin and throughout Germany. Die Linke Berlin is firmly opposed to further repressive measures such as personalised tickets, blanket stadium bans imposed as soon as a police investigation is launched, a central commission responsible for imposing stadium bans, or new surveillance tools such as facial recognition in stadiums. Staff working on fan projects should have the right to refuse to give evidence on the basis of the special relationship of trust within the meaning of Section 53(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. What is needed instead is more targeted prevention, long-term support for fan engagement and a culture of dialogue in the stadium environment.

Constitutional Protection

To protect the constitution, Berlin needs a transparent, democratically accountable and citizen-focused body that provides information on anti-democratic activities in both the physical and digital spheres. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution, through its working methods, runs counter to these principles; it does more harm to the democratic rule of law than it protects it.

In particular, the use of undercover agents and the requirements of secrecy repeatedly hinder prevention, investigation and prosecution.

The Left Party therefore advocates disbanding the Berlin Office for the Protection of the Constitution as a secret service and creating an alternative, independent institution outside the Senate Department for the Interior. Berlin needs a modern institution that actively participates in public discourse, not through intelligence-gathering methods, but through serious academic expertise and the regular involvement of external experts.

Until it is dissolved, we advocate for better rights to information, restrictions on its powers and greater oversight. A modern Office for the Protection of the Constitution must be capable of competently identifying and monitoring the evolving anti-constitutional groups and activities. It must – unlike in the past – also see itself as part of the democratic process, engage in open and pluralistic debate, and be able to further develop its own existing perspectives. The work of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution must be subject to full scrutiny by the Berlin House of Representatives and the Berlin judiciary.

In place of an agency operating like a secret service, there should be an information and documentation centre for human rights, fundamental rights and democracy, such as the Thuringian Institute for Democracy and Civil Society (IDZ) in Jena. This centre is to document neo-Nazi, racist, anti-Semitic and other activities and attitudes directed against the principles of the Constitution, as well as their structural and public manifestations. To this end, it carries out academic research

and is authorised to cooperate with third parties. The Information and Documentation Centre obtains information solely from publicly available sources and academic studies.

Safeguarding freedom of expression. Protecting the civil service from those who oppose the Constitution

Freedom of expression is also a precious right for public-sector employees and must be protected. Interference with the right to freedom of expression must be kept to a minimum. The State of Berlin cannot have any interest in uncritical employees. A democratic society requires an administration in which political positions can be discussed openly. Expressions of opinion by public-sector employees must not, provided they are not criminal offences, give rise to disciplinary action under labour or civil service law. At the same time, the public service in Berlin must be effectively protected against those who oppose the constitution. In particular, the security authorities must not be infiltrated.

We reject the introduction of a ‘constitutional loyalty check’ such as that in Brandenburg. It is disproportionate to subject all applicants for the civil service to a constitutional security vetting process. Rather, there is a need for a significant strengthening of political education in the training of candidates and employees. Training and further education on fundamental and human rights and on anti-discrimination law must be strengthened. Compulsory courses on these topics should also be provided for staff already in post. Experts from civil society must be involved. HR managers should also be trained to recognise anti-constitutional codes and veiled communication, so that appropriate measures under employment law can be taken. Furthermore, they should be enabled to access publicly available websites and social media profiles in order to verify loyalty to the constitution during the recruitment process and, where there are factual indications of anti-constitutional activity, during the course of the employment relationship. Disciplinary proceedings should be expedited by professionalising the conduct of investigations and ensuring adequate staffing levels. Staff representatives must be involved in this process.

It should be easier to remove from service those who disclose sensitive data without authorisation, or who make anti-constitutional statements or engage in anti-constitutional behaviour – particularly within the police force. Anyone who informs their superiors of misconduct amongst colleagues must be given special protection by their employer. The Whistleblower Protection Act must finally be implemented consistently for this purpose. Die Linke rejects the erosion of employees' rights in disciplinary proceedings, as implemented by the federal government in 2024.

Fire Service and Civil Protection

The professional fire service must be organised in such a way that the specified timeframes and staffing levels in the emergency medical services and fire protection can be met. We want to relieve the emergency services of tasks that are not strictly necessary and organise them efficiently, without lowering the level of qualification when staffing emergency vehicles for emergency care. We want to rapidly clear the backlog of refurbishment work on fire stations and fire engines. Voluntary work in the fire service deserves the utmost recognition and support, including in matters of compensation, provision and conditions of service.

We want to launch a genuine training and recruitment drive within the fire service, which will also increase the low proportion of women. Sufficient staff and premises must be made available for fire service training as a matter of urgency. This requires the rapid realisation of the new Berlin Fire and Rescue Academy (BFRA) in TXL.

Shaping civil protection to be reliable, inclusive and socially responsible

Attacks on the electricity supply have exposed serious weaknesses in civil protection. On the one hand, these relate to the vulnerability of our critical infrastructure; on the other, to the provision of information, assistance and supplies, particularly for people with special support needs and those who, for various reasons, are unable to organise help for themselves or seek out existing support services. We must systematically address these weaknesses and draw the necessary policy conclusions

– through investment in the resilience of the grid infrastructure, transparent contingency plans, clear lines of responsibility and financial support for those affected. Ultimately, this must also ensure that support services are easily accessible, inclusive and free from barriers. The Senate must develop a plan for emergency accommodation for people, particularly vulnerable groups, which is easily accessible and affordable even for those on low incomes. A sufficient number of suitable accommodation places must be made available for such and other emergencies. In this context, it must also be examined to what extent the use of hotel rooms – provided free of charge to those in need – is possible in the event of major incidents or disasters, on the basis of the Civil Protection Act. The inclusion of the accommodation capacities of the State Office for Refugee Affairs must also be examined in this context.

In the event of a disaster, an emergency fund must be set up quickly and without red tape to address cases of hardship and to reimburse consequential costs. In addition to reimbursing accommodation costs for hotels, care homes and other accommodation, provision must also be made for the swift and unbureaucratic reimbursement of other costs.

A strategy is needed to provide outreach support and information to people in the event of a major incident or disaster. For example, through the district volunteer agencies and in collaboration with civil society organisations, volunteers could be organised to visit people in their homes, provide them with information and, where necessary, offer support in managing their daily lives. A strategy is needed to mobilise and strengthen supportive neighbourhoods so that they can help one another in the event of a disaster. To date, there has been no functional mechanism for effectively integrating offers of help from the public and the existing capacities of civil society organisations in the event of a disaster. The Senate must therefore create the framework and tools to integrate civil society organisations into Berlin's disaster preparedness. In addition, an appropriate framework is needed to enable the targeted deployment of spontaneous helpers and their highly specialised skills in specific situations, both for the coordination of these helpers and, for example, with regard to their insurance cover. It must be ensured that standards for preparedness in the event of disasters and major incidents are introduced and implemented in care homes. This includes ensuring that emergency power supplies

must be available quickly and in sufficient quantities. Where necessary, alternative care places must be available and transport to these locations must be facilitated at short notice.

Social organisations must be regularly and fully involved in the development of plans for emergency accommodation, provision of supplies and the dissemination of information.

At federal level, the Senate must advocate to ensure that the procurement of supplies and equipment, in accordance with the recommendations of the Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance, is also made available to social security recipients and is taken into account in the standard rates.

A systematic assessment of critical points in Berlin's electricity grid must be carried out. Particular attention must be paid to facilities and components with low levels of protection which, in the event of an attack, could have a potentially major impact on the supply. In addition, provision must be made for the creation of further redundancies and isolated networks around key facilities.

We will ensure that the civil protection authorities are adequately prepared, in terms of both organisation and staffing, for disasters and major incidents. To this end, an implementation plan must be drawn up for the comprehensive roll-out of the planned 44 civil protection 'beacons' in the boroughs and 147 neighbourhood-based civil protection information points; furthermore, the boroughs must be adequately resourced, both in terms of staff and their own budgets, to fulfil their civil protection responsibilities.

Contingency plans for all public authorities – including alert chains, crisis management teams and emergency staffing to ensure the administration remains operational – must be regularly reviewed and updated. Contingency plans for childcare and education must also be drawn up for schools and nurseries.

Democracy

Democracy is not a ‘finished’ state; it must be practised by citizens day in, day out. But it must also be possible to practise it: at all levels and in all areas. It is, and remains, the task of politics to enable citizens to participate more fully. Everyone should be able to get involved in local politics and have a say in decision-making. To encourage participation, we propose that the State of Berlin establish a permanent, randomly selected citizens’ dialogue. A Citizens’ Dialogue Act should enshrine the obligation of the House of Representatives to consider the recommendations drawn up within specific timeframes.

Strengthening direct democracy

We want to lower the quorum required for referendums, as well as the higher quorum for referendums on constitutional amendments, and abolish the approval quorum. We want to expand the range of issues on which referendums may be held, so that decisions can also be made on the tariffs charged by public enterprises or on levies to be paid. A referendum should always be held in the event of the privatisation of public enterprises. We reject referendums ‘imposed from above’, which can be called at the discretion of those in power.

Furthermore, we want to introduce a right of appeal referendum, which would allow a referendum to be called on laws passed by the House of Representatives with a low signature threshold, particularly in the case of legislative amendments to previous referendums. We want to link direct democratic procedures more closely with instruments of citizen participation, such as lottery-based residents’ councils. To ensure a smooth organisational process, a service centre for citizen participation should be set up within the Senate; the state of Baden-Württemberg can serve as a model here.

Furthermore, digital signature procedures for citizens’ initiatives and referendums should be made possible in a manner that complies with data protection regulations. One possible approach for secure technical implementation is the use of the electronic ID function.

For a modern, equitable right to vote

It is not only people with German citizenship who should have the right to vote in our city, but everyone who lives here. We will therefore continue to campaign at all levels for the right to vote for people without German citizenship, who have been living here for at least five years. Furthermore, undemocratic restrictions on political competition should be abolished: unreasonably high thresholds for the number of signatures required to validate candidate nominations must be lowered, and the electoral thresholds for elections to the House of Representatives and the neighbourhood councils should be abolished. As long as the latter still exist, a substitute vote should be introduced to ensure that there are as few ‘wasted’ votes as possible. For the same reason, the introduction of an integrated run-off vote for the election of individual candidates in constituencies should be considered.

We also want to create the option of casting a ‘no’ vote against all candidate lists; this counts as a valid vote. Furthermore, a special polling station in each constituency, where votes can be cast as early as the day before the election, should be specifically promoted to first-time voters in order to lower the barrier to voting for young people. People in housing and those experiencing homelessness must be better enabled to exercise their right to vote.

Modernising the Constitution

We advocate for the establishment of a commission to put forward proposals for reforming the Berlin Constitution. Among other things, the commission should consider reforms to electoral and referendum law, citizens’ rights to participation through citizens’ councils and participatory budgeting, socialisation of services, the role of Berlin’s districts, and the protection of public services. The commission should carry out broad and multi-stage public participation using hybrid, analogue and digital formats, utilising open-source software, and actively involve citizens in the development of the proposals.

Consistently implement international law

International law and universal human rights are, for us, the fundamental benchmark for political action. They constitute the minimum international consensus on dealing with conflicts and serious crimes and are an indispensable foundation for peace, justice and international cooperation.

The rulings of international courts are an expression of this law and give concrete form to states' obligations under international law. The International Criminal Court, in particular, plays a central role in this regard by prosecuting the most serious crimes, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

For us, it is clear: the enforcement of these rulings must not be made dependent on financial or political interests, expediency or selective application. International arrest warrants must be consistently enforced – including in Berlin.

In practical terms, this means that individuals subject to an international arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court must be arrested upon entry into Germany and handed over to the competent international courts. This applies regardless of political office or international status.

Die Linke Berlin will work consistently and actively to ensure that arrest warrants against war criminals are enforced and that Germany's obligations under international law are upheld.

We advocate policies based on universal rights rather than political preferences. We do not roll out the red carpet for wanted war criminals. Human rights and international law apply to everyone – without exception.

22 Justice and Legal Policy

Access to justice

We are committed to ensuring non-discriminatory access to justice. In particular, we want to improve access for people on low incomes by removing barriers to access. We also want to further digitise the justice system in this area. Measures to achieve this could include expanding in-person advisory services, providing information in plain language and/or foreign languages, and implementing and strengthening class actions.

We recognise the importance of solicitors in ensuring that everyone has access to justice. The independent legal profession is a core component of the rule of law. The client-solicitor privilege must be protected against state interference and must not be called into question by the introduction of IP address retention. We are committed to protecting lawyers who are being persecuted. Services provided by lawyers through legal aid and court-appointed defence must be remunerated appropriately.

Victims of crime should be protected from the consequences of criminal offences through more effective victim support. This includes better funding for existing services and improved communication between the relevant state authorities. Significantly more extensive services in the area of offender support, particularly in the fields of youth criminal justice and organised crime, as well as comprehensive and affordable public services, help many people to avoid criminal behaviour in their lives and thus make Berlin safer.

We will work to ensure that a night-time on-call service is reintroduced at Tiergarten Magistrates' Court in order to fulfil the constitutional requirement of the right to a judge as laid down by law and to relieve the burden on the public prosecutor's office, which is currently called upon to act in its stead.

Local proximity is a key factor in the judicial system's integration into society. It makes the judiciary accessible, approachable and visibly close to citizens. We advocate a city-wide review of the need for a needs-based local presence of judicial facilities. For example, despite its large size, the district of Marzahn-Hellersdorf lacks such a judicial facility.

Effectively prosecuting white-collar crime

Economic crime, corruption and abuse of office pose an immense threat to the state's ability to act and to the trust placed in it. According to experts, the annual loss of tax revenue due to tax offences amounts to between two and three hundred billion nationwide. Although Germany currently ranks in what appears to be a respectable tenth place on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, this must not obscure the fact that the key CPI score – out of a possible 100 points – has fallen from 81 points in 2015 to 77 points today. Experts regard this as one of the worst scores since 2012. We cannot deny it: Germany has a corruption problem that is closely intertwined with tax and economic crime. This cannot fail to have an impact on criminal prosecution in our city. We advocate strengthening the organisational and staffing resources of the economic crime departments within the public prosecutor's office. This requires not only highly qualified public prosecutors, but also dedicated economic and IT specialists who are capable of effectively following the 'money trail' in the international cyberspace. We regard it as our duty to raise public awareness of the dangers posed by this form of crime and to protect society from them, rather than using the resources of criminal law in a time-consuming and costly manner to focus on prosecuting petty offences committed by those affected by poverty.

Prison system and rehabilitation

Social problems require social solutions – prisons must not be used as a dumping ground for society's problems

. After all, every custodial sentence invariably has negative consequences for the convicted person. Those affected are stigmatised by society, their mental state – which is often already fragile – is further weakened, and in most cases it is their relatives who bear the main mental and financial burden of the conviction. Prison sentences must therefore be the absolute exception. We want to systematically address the looming threat of unconstitutional overcrowding in the prison system.

Substitute custodial sentences are unjust. They affect only poor people, and their consequences are disproportionate to the minor offences on which they are based. We wish to reduce the number of substitute custodial sentences served by implementing measures to avoid imprisonment (e.g. the 'Day by Day' scheme) and, in all other cases, to enforce them only in open prisons. We intend to conduct a scientific evaluation of their value in terms of criminal policy and, depending on the results, take the initiative at the federal level where appropriate. We wish to restore the central importance of open prison to the forefront. We reject the use of electronic tagging to monitor relaxed prison conditions. It runs counter to the principle of rehabilitation and entails significant costs. We are also fulfilling our mandate for social reintegration by further modernising the existing accommodation facilities at Tegel and Moabit prisons. The framework conditions for cultural and sporting activities must be expanded and improved. We therefore intend to reverse the cuts decided upon by the Black-Red Senate. We want to expand opportunities for active participation in the digital world.

The process of serving a custodial sentence should be made easier, and projects aimed at preventing imprisonment should be strengthened.

Where a custodial sentence is unavoidable, responsibility towards prisoners must be taken seriously and human dignity guaranteed. The special responsibility that prison staff have with regard to safeguarding the human and fundamental rights of prisoners must be a constant focus in training, further professional development and day-to-day operations. We are committed to ensuring that working conditions in the prison service are improved in the long term.

We support the responsible work of prison staff by providing comprehensive supervision and further training programmes. The particular risks of corruption, abuse of power and inappropriate treatment within the prison system must be countered through appropriate measures, developed and updated in collaboration with staff.

To this end, we wish to establish or expand anonymous, independent reporting channels. Supporting staff in their work also includes remuneration that reflects the level of responsibility and the particular stresses associated with carrying out their duties. Only in this way can we retain motivated staff, who are a key factor in the successful rehabilitation achieved through the prison service. We support the introduction of the senior prison service and are committed to its gradual expansion. Independent organisations play an indispensable role, which we intend to promote specifically. Cutting back on services will, in fact, lead to significantly higher costs than can ever be saved.

Services for prisoners must be strictly tailored to their needs. Prisoners facing language barriers require additional support to ensure their rights are upheld. Older prisoners require sufficient nursing staff and appropriate infrastructure. We want to improve suicide prevention within prisons. To ensure that prisoners are not released from custody in debt, they must be paid the minimum wage in jobs within the prison that are subject to social security contributions. Naturally, the housing situation in Berlin also poses a major challenge for prisoners. We therefore wish to create suitable support structures to ensure that former prisoners do not end up homeless. This must apply in particular to those released from pre-trial detention.

Inmate representative bodies, as well as independent prisoners' newspapers such as **Der Lichtblick**, are an indispensable and integral part of successful rehabilitation. The same applies to theatre projects and other cultural events. They act as a bridge to the outside world and are the best safeguard against prisons becoming places cut off from society. We will reverse the cuts imposed here by the CDU-SPD Senate. The Berlin Prison Advisory Board and

the prison advisory boards have, for decades, been serving prisoners on a voluntary basis and with great dedication, thereby contributing to rehabilitation and the safety of our city. We will strengthen their role.

We will tackle overcrowding in remand centres by speeding up the criminal justice process, ensuring there are sufficient judicial posts and staff to carry out forensic analysis of evidence.

Strengthening and supporting judicial staff

A functioning constitutional state requires qualified and motivated staff who are provided with a supportive working environment. To strengthen the judiciary, we intend to improve the working conditions for all judicial professions – particularly non-judicial staff – in order to attract young talent and make the sector appealing to applicants.

Opportunities for further training and professional development are to be expanded. In particular, we wish to evaluate the experience gained with the qualification requirement for family court judges and examine whether a similar requirement for other judicial roles could also lead to an improvement in judicial practice.

The attractiveness of the judiciary as an employer depends on modern tools and working environments. We are driving forward the digitalisation of the Berlin judiciary and are committed to standardising the judicial IT landscape. The state's court buildings must be modernised.

Legal education

We are committed to a modern legal education. This is of paramount importance, as those trained in this field will frequently go on to hold key positions in a functioning state. For us, this involves, on the one hand, reducing the compulsory syllabus in the qualifying examination – which has continued to expand over decades

in the compulsory examination to ease the burden on candidates. We will ensure this by, on the one hand, giving greater weight in the compulsory examination to the legally prescribed importance of a systematic understanding of the legal system and the ability to work methodically. On the other hand, we will shift certain areas from the scope of the state compulsory examination to the degree programme. For us, a modern education also means strengthening areas of law that serve in particular to protect vulnerable groups, notably tenancy law, social law, environmental law and sexual offences law.

In addition, we intend to introduce an e-exam as part of the first examination.

The second marking of the written examinations should be carried out 'blind', i.e. without knowledge of the first marker's assessment. This avoids anchoring effects. In particular, following the introduction of the e-exam, marking no longer needs to be carried out sequentially. The additional workload for the second markers is justified given the particular significance of the marks. Accordingly, the examination board for the oral examination should also be unaware of the preliminary marks. We address the susceptibility of the oral examination to discrimination by introducing a low-threshold point of contact to prevent conflicts in examination situations. The point of contact should respond to conflict situations below the threshold of bias and document the reports submitted by candidates. In this way, the Examinations Office can assess the suitability of the examiners appointed. Diverse examination boards, in particular those with gender-balanced composition (cf. Section 7(3), fourth sentence, of the Schleswig-Holstein Judicial Trainee Regulations (JAVO)), are indispensable to us. We advocate for examiners from the judiciary to be relieved of their regular duties.

We are addressing the shortage of skilled staff by strengthening training capacities within the legal traineeship programme. Waiting periods of sometimes more than two years between submitting an application and the start of training do not take young people's lives into proper consideration and cast the judiciary as an employer in a poor light overall. In the meantime, hard-won legal knowledge and methodologies are at risk of being lost, or graduates trained in

graduates trained in Berlin may turn their backs entirely on the city – and thus on the Berlin judiciary – by choosing to continue their training in a federal state with shorter waiting times, namely Brandenburg.

We are campaigning for a reform of the preparatory service to allow it to be undertaken on a part-time basis. For us, this includes extending the individual training phases, a six-hour working day and no reduction in pay by one-fifth, because single parents, young families and carers in particular face a significant financial burden and, due to the demands of bringing up children and providing care, are often unable to earn additional income.

We facilitate digital registration for legal examinations, allowing the necessary documents to be submitted online.

We are committed to embedding the workings of the judiciary and the foundations of the democratic rule of law more firmly in the Berlin school curriculum.

Resilience of the Constitutional Court

The Constitutional Court of the State of Berlin must be protected against an anti-democratic takeover aimed at undermining the rule of law. Many experts propose, in particular, raising the threshold that must be met in order to amend the composition of the Constitutional Court (e.g. the number of judges, quorums for election, re-election, etc.). In Berlin, these institutional rules are already largely enshrined in constitutional law, meaning that any amendment is always fraught with difficulties. However, making such amendments more difficult is always a double-edged sword. Conversely, this can enable a minority to make the renewal or election of constitutional judges entirely impossible. We wish to explore with experts how such a deadlock can be avoided,

e.g. through automatic referral to the Federal Constitutional Court.

Strengthening the democratic self-governance of the judiciary

We are committed to a democratic and self-governing judiciary. We therefore continue to advocate the concept of independent judicial councils which carry out central administrative tasks and bear responsibility for personnel, budgetary and organisational matters. The current system grants the ministries of justice a high degree of decision-making authority. We, on the other hand, wish to work with judges and judges' representative bodies to develop models that better fulfil the constitutional requirement of Article 92 of the Basic Law, according to which the administration of justice is entrusted to judges. As a first step towards this, we intend to strengthen the Judges' Selection Committee by involving it even more closely than before in the process of appointing judges. To this end, we are examining constitutionally sound solutions with a clear focus on strengthening judicial independence, which may also serve as a model for a necessary constitutional amendment at federal level. The abolition of the decentralised chapter structure for the local courts, regional courts and the Kammergericht in favour of a central Chapter 0620 'Ordinary Jurisdiction' in the current 2026/2027 state budget represents a step backwards towards an outdated concentration of power at ministerial level. The previous decentralised chapter structure has proved its worth and ensured a high degree of transparency. We will advocate for the reintroduction of the decentralised chapter structure for the ordinary courts and law enforcement agencies, and for its preservation in the remaining areas of Berlin's judiciary in the future.

Curbing class-based justice

We will monitor the reform process initiated at federal level by the Black-Red coalition to revise the rules governing court proceedings in a critical yet constructive manner, in order to prevent vulnerable and already structurally disadvantaged groups from having their legal rights vis-à-vis the state further curtailed. The guiding principle of a humanistic legal system is human dignity, whether the individuals concerned are victims or defendants. This is what we, as the Left, stand for.

We stand against the evident bias in criminal procedure and criminal law that affects people with little or no income. The vast majority of criminal proceedings are directed against them. They also bear a heavier burden as a result of criminal proceedings than people on a good income. They are often unable to afford a defence lawyer and are therefore left without legal representation during the pre-trial investigation and subsequently in court, unless the legal requirements for court-appointed defence counsel are met. They can only pay fines by severely restricting their daily needs and those of their families, or are unable to pay them at all. Instead, they are forced to serve custodial sentences in lieu of payment. In line with professional associations, we therefore call for the decriminalisation of typical ‘poverty offences’, in particular so-called ‘fare evasion’ (Section 265a of the German Criminal Code [StGB]), and specifically for its complete decriminalisation rather than merely reclassifying it as an administrative offence, as this would often merely shift the problem elsewhere), the introduction of an alternative method of enforcing fines, namely in the form of community service regulated by law and to be specified in detail; the introduction of legal aid in criminal proceedings; the extension of the scope of warnings with a reservation of punishment, with the possibility of issuing instructions with a preventive effect (removal of the requirement for the existence of special circumstances), and a critical review of the practice of expedited proceedings. The same applies to the practice of summary penalty order proceedings. In particular, we wish to ensure that these types of proceedings do not serve to process offences linked to poverty on a mass scale or facilitate consequences relating to residence rights. Outside the realms of economic and organised crime, proceeds of crime should not be subject to confiscation in criminal proceedings if they no longer exist and if the confiscation order would prevent the defendant’s future reintegration into society. In criminal proceedings against young people and adolescents, we generally consider the statutory educational principle underlying confiscation – in particular, confiscation by way of compensation – to be a barrier. This does not affect the civil law pursuit of claims by the injured party.

23 Sports policy

Sport for all: a city on the move

Sport connects and brings people together. Our aim is for it to enable participation in social life – regardless of economic status, background, age or gender. Children and young people should be able to experience daily physical activity and sport as part of their school routine. To this end, we are gradually introducing daily physical activity sessions and additional sports programmes within the all-day school timetable, strengthening partnerships between schools and sports clubs, and improving the use of existing sports facilities. At the same time, we are investing more heavily in the refurbishment and construction of new sports facilities, as well as in the training and recruitment of additional PE teachers. In this way, we will create a comprehensive programme of daily physical activity in Berlin's schools over the coming years – in a way that is both predictable and financially viable – for better health, greater concentration and stronger social cohesion among our children and young people.

Particularly in times of a rampant 'epidemic of loneliness', we need sport as a place where we can all come together. Sports clubs are places where solidarity is put into practice. Here, people learn to take on responsibility together. We want to strengthen this social function so that clubs remain safe havens against social isolation and places of political education in the future too. Yet today, access still too often depends on one's financial means or gender. We want to change that.

Our guiding principle remains: we promote sport in all its forms, with grassroots sport and social participation forming the foundation upon which elite sport is built. In doing so, we recognise that sporting events are venues for social participation and bring together people from a wide variety of backgrounds. They make an important contribution to social cohesion and integration.

Our aim, however, is to ensure that attending such events is not a luxury. That is why ticket prices must be set at socially acceptable levels and a sufficient number of accessible seats must be guaranteed.

Strengthening voluntary work and providing reliable support for clubs

Volunteering is the backbone of sport. Without volunteers, neither community sport nor competitive sport would be possible. To support this, we will significantly increase the flat-rate allowance for coaches and drive forward digitalisation to relieve volunteers of administrative burdens. In the interests of promoting multi-purpose use, sport should be given the widest possible access to schools. We remain committed to holding athlete awards ceremonies in the districts to explicitly recognise and honour the many volunteers. We will renew the funding agreement with the State Sports Federation to provide clubs with planning certainty, and adapt it to meet new challenges. We will increase funding for the club investment programme and streamline its administrative procedures.

Together with the State Sports Federation, we will set up a supplementary fund that invests directly in the grassroots of mass sport, in particular to secure staff and maintain infrastructure.

Expanding equality and protection against discrimination

Sport must be a safe space for everyone, free from discrimination. That is why we will not tolerate even the slightest hint of fascism in sport. We are resolutely opposed to the infiltration of clubs and supporters' stands by far-right groups.

FLINTA* people face structural disadvantages in organised sport – in terms of membership numbers, visibility and, to a massive extent, the allocation of resources and access to leadership positions. Almost half of all women have experienced sexual harassment whilst participating in sport.

We will put an end to this material inequality and these safety shortcomings. We are not only expanding support, we are guaranteeing it through concrete measures:

We will amend the Sports Funding Act (SportFG) and the Sports Facilities Usage Regulations (SPAN) to enshrine equality in law.

We are introducing a binding quota for the allocation of funds. As a first step, at least 40 per cent of sports funding and public training slots are to be earmarked for girls* and FLIN-TA* teams.

The allocation of public funds will generally be linked to demonstrable efforts towards equality.

Protection policies will become a requirement: from 2026, the Child Protection Seal (or an equivalent, externally evaluated violence prevention policy) will be mandatory for all sports organisations receiving public funding, including when public sports facilities are allocated.

We will establish a central, independent monitoring and complaints body for discrimination in sport. This body will bring together expertise on combating racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, queerphobia and ableism (discrimination on the grounds of disability) under one roof.

It will monitor compliance with funding allocation criteria and serve as an intersectional point of contact for all those affected, ensuring their voices are effectively heard. When renovating or constructing new sports facilities, we will consistently advocate for the creation of additional all-gender changing rooms and non-discriminatory single cubicles to ensure freedom of choice and safe spaces for everyone.

We support queer sports clubs and actively combat queerphobia

Furthermore, we are launching a programme through which clubs can receive training and certification in the field of anti-discrimination.

We aim to develop methods to bring groups that have been under-represented to date – such as migrant women and FLINTA* people – more fully into the clubs.

Inclusion as the legacy of the Special Olympics – Jahn-Sportpark for everyone!

The legacy of the Special Olympics must be sustainably consolidated. We need binding inclusion and genuine participation so that structural discrimination against people with disabilities in sport is finally eradicated.

To this end, we will:

- draw up a phased plan to achieve the greatest possible level of accessibility. In doing so, we will set clear priorities to achieve tangible improvements in all boroughs as quickly as possible. New sports facilities must, as a matter of principle, meet the inclusive needs of both participants and spectators.
- consistently implement the target of at least one fully inclusive sports facility per borough, which is accessible and easy to find and use. To achieve this target more quickly and cost-effectively, we will prioritise the construction of inclusive ‘standard sports halls’. We will ensure that these accessible halls are allocated as a priority to clubs offering inclusive programmes and to sports groups for people with disabilities.
- Link public funding for sporting events to high, verifiable inclusion standards.
- Establish a low-threshold, person-centred ‘Assistance Fund’ to overcome bureaucratic barriers to participation in sport. This should be organised as a central ‘staff pool’ (e.g. within the sports federations), which clubs can access without red tape.
- fund permanent interpreting posts (German Sign Language).
- Establish binding participatory structures involving ‘experts in their own cause’, such as the Berlin Disability Parliament and other self-advocacy organisations.

We want to promote inclusion in every form of sport, including explicitly water and ice sports, climbing and self-organised sports in parks.

The Jahn-Sportpark remains a key project. We are campaigning for a review of the existing plans for the new stadium and support the demands of the 'Jahn-Sportpark' citizens' initiative for a more cost-effective stadium. Our clear focus is on developing the sports park as an inclusive facility for grassroots sport, enabling people with disabilities and impairments to participate without restriction.

'Decade of investment' for school sports halls and district sports facilities

We will launch a "decade of investment" in grassroots sport. To this end, we will set up a central building authority for the construction of sports facilities.

It is scandalous that sports halls in Berlin are in such a state of disrepair that, for years, they have not even been usable for compulsory school PE lessons. We are increasing the budget for sports facilities at school sites and prioritising the rapid refurbishment of these halls so that children and young people can exercise their right to physical activity and sport.

We are using the school building programme as both an opportunity and a means to this end, as sports facilities are being planned directly as part of this initiative. The same applies to sports facilities in the boroughs, the refurbishment of which we will accelerate as part of the sports facility refurbishment programme. We will increase the budget for this programme.

We are committed to ensuring that new sports halls are, as a matter of principle, designed as multi-storey buildings in order to make efficient use of space. We provide targeted financial support to the boroughs to enable them to put their local sports development plans into practice. In future, we want to work with a structured and data-driven approach to sports development planning that enables new sports facilities to be delivered swiftly. This must also take into account rapidly growing sports such as flag football, cricket, darts,

padel tennis and pickleball must also be taken into account in order to cater for the diversity of sporting interests. We will increase the funding allocated for this purpose. We are committed to reactivating unused sports and exercise venues, which are to be transferred to the responsibility of sports clubs. Sports facilities used only seasonally must be put to active use all year round.

In the public procurement of sports equipment (e.g. balls and kits), we ensure compliance with fair trade standards and provide funding for sustainably produced equipment.

We also support the installation of modern artificial turf pitches without environmentally harmful plastic granules, in order to conserve water resources.

The allocation of sports facilities will finally be carried out digitally, transparently and fairly for all users, with clubs receiving close support from district sports offices that have been strengthened with additional staff. In future, sports offices should specifically reach out to disabled sports clubs and inclusive groups to offer them slots in newly completed, accessible halls, thereby easing the burden on volunteer committee members.

Don't leave Berlin high and dry!

The swimming pool contract that has been finalised provides planning certainty for Berliner Bäder-Betriebe (BBB). However, the funds pledged in the contract must be reliably disbursed and adjusted in line with the massive rise in construction and energy costs.

The agreement must form the basis for a renovation programme that is accessible, energy-efficient and socially inclusive. We will give priority to securing funding for swimming pools in need of renovation that are at risk of closing.

Saunas in indoor swimming pools are to be reopened without restrictions. We will provide the necessary staff and financial resources to ensure that indoor swimming pools remain open reliably, even during school holidays and public holidays. Maintenance and repair work should be organised in such a way as to avoid closures lasting several months.

Use of the swimming pools by nurseries, schools and clubs will remain free of charge. A new and transparent structure is needed for the allocation of swimming slots.

We will ensure that all swimming pools are heated to at least 25 degrees. We will evaluate the new pricing structure for the swimming pool facilities after the first season and adjust it in consultation with pool users.

The cost of admission to Berlin's swimming pools should not depend on where you live. Admission to Berlin's swimming pools will be free for all children and pupils under the age of 18. We do not want stigmatisation at the ticket office, but rather free access for all. As ID checks at swimming pools effectively exclude people without valid documents, we will abolish them. We will ensure safety by strengthening local social work, through sports education projects and conflict management in the pools.

Our aim is for no child to leave primary school without knowing how to swim. To this end, we are expanding school swimming centres and free catch-up courses in cooperation with clubs, particularly in boroughs with high proportions of non-swimmers. To address the shortage of water facilities in the short term, we are also relying on innovative solutions such as swimming containers to help children become accustomed to the water.

In the long term, we are guided by the master plan of the 'Bäderallianz Deutschland': we need water facilities tailored to local needs in all boroughs. In practical terms, this means maintaining and systematically refurbishing existing swimming pools, as well as building new multi-purpose swimming pools, particularly in growing boroughs such as Pankow, Spandau and Marzahn-Hellersdorf, which are currently underserved.

Legalising swimming: making the Spree, the Havel and the lakes safe and accessible to all

Access to water and cool recreational spaces is part of public services. In view of increasingly hot summers, it is time to end the 100-year-old blanket ban on swimming in the Spree.

Instead of clinging to a repressive policy of bans, we want to designate legally compliant 'river bathing areas' at suitable locations and consistently improve water quality for this purpose. At the same time, we are committed to legalising swimming in lakes that are already in use, in order to create public opportunities to cool off, particularly in districts without outdoor swimming pools.

Our aim is for at least one official bathing spot to be assessed and approved in each district. For these heavily frequented natural bathing spots, we will implement viable cleanliness, lifesaving and environmental plans that combine nature conservation with the enjoyment of swimming.

YES to sport – NO to the Olympics

The Olympic ideal of bringing people together is a good one. We take a positive view of the Olympic values of peace, inclusion and international understanding. However, we must face reality: given the dramatic underfunding of grassroots sport, the crisis in public services and the social divisions in our city, bidding to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games is irresponsible.

We on the Left therefore firmly reject a bid by Berlin to host the Olympic Games. Berlin has other concerns than expensive prestige events. In a city where administrative appointments are in short supply and buses and trains do not run reliably, the Olympic Games would lead to chaos. We find it unacceptable that the Senate is making necessary investment in sport contingent on whether a mega-event takes place. Berlin does not need one-off spectacles, but consistent and sustained support for grassroots sport.

A mega-event such as the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, which will cost billions, cannot and must not be imposed against the will of the city's residents. Berlin should decide for itself whether it wants the Olympics. That is why we expressly support the push for a referendum. We stand alongside those who demand democratic participation and will respect the vote of Berlin's residents.

Venues for the future of sport: the Sportforum and the Olympic Park

With the Sportforum Hohenschönhausen and the Olympic Park, Berlin has two sports complexes with unique potential. However, both sites are suffering from a massive backlog of renovation work, which we will systematically tackle.

We are developing the Hohenschönhausen Sports Forum as a living alternative to Olympic megalomania: rather than pouring billions into buildings that are rarely used, we are making a sustainable investment here in the 'heart of Berlin's competitive sport'. We want to turn it into a flagship European sports campus that guarantees world-class elite sport without isolating itself, whilst building bridges to local community sport. We will also modernise the Olympic Park carefully and in keeping with its heritage status. Our vision here is not a gigantic event arena for the International Olympic Committee (IOC), but a 'sports park for all Berliners'. We will prevent the commercialisation and isolation of the site and, instead, develop the park further as an open, green space for recreation and exercise, catering for club and recreational sport.

We call for a binding support framework for all competitive sports centres. This should effectively reduce the number of athletes dropping out of sport or retiring prematurely through individual support, structured health and workload management, and close cooperation between school, training and family. At the same time, athletes must be supported at an early stage through systematic career guidance and dual career planning to secure their future paths in education, work and sport, so that sporting support has a lasting impact and the skills they have acquired remain within the sporting system.

Safeguarding ice sports – improving energy efficiency

Ice sports are deeply rooted in Berlin's sporting culture, from the Eisbären and curling to public ice skating in winter. Yet ageing infrastructure and high energy costs are threatening many venues. We are committed to preserving Berlin's ice rinks and stadiums. We will prevent the 'disappearance of ice rinks'. Nor will we accept daily or seasonal reductions in opening hours. We are launching an in-

An investment programme for the energy-efficient refurbishment of refrigeration systems, to ensure that ice sports remain environmentally sustainable and financially viable even in times of the climate crisis. In particular, the Erika-Heß Ice Rink must finally be comprehensively modernised. We recognise the significance of the rink beyond the district and therefore wish to make its refurbishment a state-level responsibility.

Better conditions for water sports

We are committed to ensuring that the Grünau regatta course is developed into a centrally managed main facility for water sports in Berlin, in order to create optimal conditions for elite sport. In addition, new facilities such as water-skiing, kitesurfing and canoe slalom courses are to be created, so that all water sports have suitable infrastructure. We call for a uniform and legally secure set of regulations across Berlin for jetty facilities, in which the relevant sports associations are bindingly involved. Furthermore, sufficient swimming jetties are to be erected to enable barrier-free access to water sports.

Sport in local neighbourhoods and communities

We are strengthening informal sport that does not require club membership. We will expand programmes such as ‘Sport im Park’ and ‘Berlin bewegt sich’ to meet the increased demand for freely accessible exercise. Specifically, we call for a table tennis table campaign, the installation of freely accessible Frisbee, golf and ninja obstacle courses, and the refurbishment and construction of skateparks in public parks. We will designate new, well-lit running routes in parks across the boroughs to ensure the safety of those taking part in sport. To further lower the barriers to sport and exercise, we will install so-called ‘sport boxes’ in public spaces. There, sports and play equipment (such as balls, rackets or fitness equipment) can be borrowed free of charge and with ease via an app. Many public football pitches and basketball courts are dilapidated, with missing goals or damaged surfaces. We are launching a special programme to refurbish existing neighbourhood sports facilities. In doing so, we are involving children and young people

directly into the planning process so that what is actually needed is built.

Berlin's neighbourhoods will become more liveable – with more sports and swimming facilities!

In new housing development projects, we hold investors to account: for large-scale projects, the provision of publicly accessible, consumption-free and open-air sports facilities (such as football pitches, calisthenics areas or skate parks) must be made a binding requirement. We will assess new urban neighbourhoods to be built in the medium and long term to ensure that covered and uncovered sports facilities have been planned in line with demand. We will adjust the plans accordingly to ensure that new urban neighbourhoods are designed with sport in mind. Each school requires at least one large playing pitch suitable for competitive sport, complete with a functional building, and each urban neighbourhood requires a swimming pool that meets sporting standards.

Sport and housing must not be played off against one another: for every sports facility that is to be closed, a replacement must be provided, as close as possible. For large-scale new-build projects, we call for a mandatory assessment of communal or public swimming pool facilities. We will explore the possibility of converting suitable state-owned roof spaces into sports areas (e.g. urban pools modelled on the Viennese example or sports courts) to make them accessible to everyone. We will launch a pilot project involving the use of swimming pools on the rooftops of a large residential complex, combined with social infrastructure and neighbourhood meeting places, as well as rules for inclusive, accessible and communal use.

e-sports and gaming

e-sports are part of the everyday reality for many young people. We recognise the achievements of e-sports players and aim to support non-profit structures in this sector, in order to move gaming out of the purely commercial sphere and into community life. We are establishing e-sports as a social activity within local youth and community organisation work. Funding will be tied to clear, community-

public-interest criteria in order to strengthen media literacy and the protection of young people. This presents an opportunity to provide young people with a low-threshold, accessible space for social interaction. Our aim is to create the legal framework so that e-sports programmes serving the public interest are fully eligible for sports funding.

Professional sport, fan culture and fans' rights

We recognise the enormous social influence of our professional football clubs in Berlin. They foster a sense of identity, inspire people to get active and carry out vital youth work. But sport belongs to the fans, not to corporate giants. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the fan communities in their fight against increasing commercialisation and surveillance.

We reject blanket repression against football fans and collective punishment. Instead, we call for genuine de-escalation and a reduction in police presence.

We are committed to preserving fan culture. Standing areas, affordable tickets and the 50+1 rule are non-negotiable for us.

For us, fans are first and foremost an asset, not a problem group. We will provide greater financial support for fan projects. Furthermore, we stand in solidarity with fan support groups and back them in their causes. In particular, we want to curtail the powers of the police. Staff working in fan projects and support groups should be granted the right to refuse to give evidence under Section 53(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (StPO) due to the special relationship of trust they enjoy.

We support them in their efforts to combat discrimination, racism and anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment in stadiums. Our solidarity extends not only to the supporters' stands of the major professional clubs, but also to the diverse and committed fan communities of smaller clubs and other sports, which often carry out important work that goes unnoticed by the public.

Ban advertising for sports betting

Sports betting is a form of gambling and carries a significant risk of addiction. The business model is based on people losing money – and low-threshold betting apps, in particular, exacerbate this risk. We therefore call on the Berlin Senate to advocate at federal level for a far-reaching ban on sports betting advertising. At state level, prevention and awareness-raising measures must be significantly stepped up, particularly with regard to young men in sports clubs as a group at particular risk. The external appearance of betting shops is regulated. This includes, amongst other things, a requirement for betting shops to have tinted external windows that prevent people from seeing inside, a ban on images that encourage gambling (e.g. illustrations of slot machines or games of chance), and a ban on the use of sportspeople or other well-known personalities in the shop's design as a means of attracting customers. Furthermore, they must display clear and highly visible warnings on their external signage about the risks of gambling.

Doping and the misuse of medication are also on the rise in grassroots sport, particularly in gyms. We call for targeted and intensive awareness-raising measures aimed at young people in order to effectively curb the use of substances that pose a risk to health for the purpose of building muscle.

24 Anti-fascism

Berlin is colourful and diverse. To ensure it remains so, Die Linke stands as a strong anti-fascist force alongside all those who oppose hatred, incitement and exclusion and who fight for a city based on solidarity. Whilst the authoritarian right is on the rise worldwide, right-wing and far-right forces here too dream of seizing power and driving out millions of our—

bar staff, friends and colleagues. Instead of taking a firm stand against this, the policies of the federal government and the Berlin Senate are further fuelling this shift to the right: through hate speech against migrants, pressure on the unemployed, and a policy of militarisation and rearmament rather than peace and social justice. It is on this fertile ground that the inhuman and authoritarian ideologies of the far right thrive.

For an anti-fascist metropolis

We want — as in Saxony-Anhalt — to enshrine anti-fascism as a state objective in the Berlin Constitution. The revival and spread of fascist, neo-Nazi, racist, anti-feminist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic ideas and endeavours, as well as any other form of group-focused hostility, run counter to the fundamental principles of democracy and fundamental rights, and to the protection of peaceful coexistence. It is the duty of the state and the responsibility of every individual to prevent this from happening.

We will campaign for a broad consensus amongst all democratic parliamentary groups in the Berlin House of Representatives, which excludes any cooperation with the AfD in parliamentary initiatives and processes.

We advocate a ban on the AfD and will work to ensure that Berlin fulfils its constitutional duty and takes the initiative to table a corresponding motion in the Bundesrat.

We will develop a cross-departmental state strategy dedicated to the systematic combating of far-right structures and activities, which will be regularly evaluated. The aim of an effective strategy must be to roll back the far right's presence in Berlin, strengthen democratic civil society, protect those affected in the process, and safeguard the democratic functioning of the state. We intend to make consistent use of legal options without imposing blanket restrictions on fundamental rights. In addition to developing a strategy, we will work towards establishing an institutionalised forum for inter-agency dialogue, for example through an annual inter-agency conference on combating far-right structures and activities.

Strengthening anti-fascist civil society

In view of the rapid rise in far-right and neo-Nazi incidents, particularly those involving teenagers and young adults, counselling services, victim support, registers, independent archives and anonymous complaint mechanisms must be strengthened and expanded, both structurally and financially. Funding must be structured and secured in a way that meets needs and is free from red tape. Furthermore, prevention programmes must be strengthened and expanded. Through target-group-specific prevention programmes, professionally sound projects can directly address risk factors such as poverty, personal experiences of violence, educational disadvantage or barriers to accessing training. These include counselling services to help young people distance themselves from far-right scenes, digital prevention initiatives to counter propaganda, and community-based programmes that offer young people alternatives to violence-oriented group identities. Prevention must be directed against the many manifestations of inequality-based thinking and anti-democratic attitudes; in addition to far-right and neo-Nazi ideologies, this includes, for example, anti-feminism, everyday racism, anti-Semitism, conspiracy theories and religious fundamentalist attitudes.

Attempts at intimidation and acts of violence by the far right on the streets, in schools, youth clubs and sports clubs have increased in the recent past. These attacks originate from groups within which minors are also becoming radicalised. A corresponding sen-

Awareness-raising regarding right-wing ideologies must be embedded in teacher training. We also call for the development of a safety and networking strategy for associations and youth clubs potentially affected by right-wing violence. We reject approaches aimed at ‘accepting youth work’, as practised in the 1990s, as they have been shown not to combat right-wing dominance but to promote it.

We wish to offer further training opportunities to activists who campaign for democracy and human rights and against far-right incitement and violence. This requires a central, low-threshold point of contact, to be established through a project entitled ‘Engagement against Far-Right Violence’ at the Berlin State Volunteer Agency.

We want staff working in education, the social sector and the civil service in particular, as well as security staff, staff representatives and works council members, to receive compulsory training and further education on the topics of discrimination, racism and how to deal with far-right ideologies. This requires a strengthening of the further education programmes offered by associations, organisations and public bodies, and a binding provision for time off work to undertake this further education.

In addition, there is a need for wide-ranging public campaigns that use advertising space, social media and opinion leaders to educate the public about far-right ideologies and to strengthen awareness of democracy, fundamental rights and social cohesion. Targeted initiatives could, for example, focus on recognising inhuman hate propaganda and incitement to hatred, on strengthening media literacy, or on encouraging moral courage.

Decriminalisation of anti-fascist associations and organisations

Anti-fascism thrives on independent, voluntary engagement. In the USA, Hungary and, increasingly, in Germany too, anti-fascist activists are being targeted. Anti-fascist associations such as the Association of Victims of Nazi Persecution

– the Federation of Anti-Fascists – or Rote Hilfe are facing tax-related attacks or having their accounts closed (so-called ‘debanking’). We stand firmly

by their side and defend their charitable status. As left-wingers, we also stand in solidarity with peaceful anti-fascist civil disobedience and campaign for its decriminalisation. We insist on proportionality and compliance with applicable law, and consistently reject the extradition of activists such as Maja T. to other states.

Anti-fascism and freedom of expression

Far-right extremists are increasingly promoting their worldview amongst young people, seeking access to youth leisure facilities or specifically targeting the unmet needs of young people. Here, we need to strengthen district-level outreach work, as well as establish clear guidelines, responsibilities and reporting procedures that help de-escalate situations in the event of acute incidents and protect those affected. We will expand target-group-specific programmes and measures to help young people leave extremist groups, which mitigate contributing factors such as personal experiences of violence, barriers to education and a lack of professional and social integration. Initiatives to combat child poverty must be more closely integrated, as social injustice has been shown to make young people more susceptible to authoritarian ideologies.

Freedom of expression for youth work organisations is a precious asset that makes a nuanced engagement with extremism and anti-democratic attitudes possible in the first place, and which Die Linke defends vehemently.

Dismantling far-right networks

The far right poses a particular threat to marginalised groups in Berlin. As left-wingers, we intend to make full use of all existing legal means to protect them, in order to prevent, prosecute and investigate far-right crimes.

We call for a ban on all militant neo-Nazi organisations, such as the so-called ‘Dritter Weg’, the DJV, the NPD and ‘Heimat’. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution has been at the forefront of combating these organisations

In the past, they have tended to be more of a hindrance. For this reason, public prosecutors' offices and investigative authorities should shift their focus in terms of both case content and staffing, and deepen their cross-border cooperation in order to advance the criminal prosecution of these organisations – particularly where links exist within the police, security agencies and special forces.

We are also committed to the systematic disarmament of far-right structures.

Protecting state structures from right-wing infiltration

Civil servants who espouse far-right ideologies or are even members of an anti-constitutional organisation pose a particular threat to the people of Berlin and our democratic way of life, especially in view of the threat of governments with far-right participation.

Accordingly, we are following the debate on how to deal with civil servants who hold far-right views or are prominent members of the AfD. We are opposed to new occupational bans, but we intend to campaign to ensure that the legal scope available in Berlin is explored and utilised consistently, and that further measures are put in place to protect our democratic institutions from being undermined from within. In doing so, we are focusing, amongst other things, on prevention during the recruitment and training process, as well as on rigorous case-by-case assessments. Particular attention must be paid to especially critical areas of the civil service, such as the security services, the judiciary and the education sector.

In recent years, it has become apparent that neo-Nazi organisations are using public sports facilities and clubs to spread their ideology and radicalise their members.

In the martial arts sector in particular, we are observing with concern how neo-Nazis practise violence, recruit young people and build networks in preparation for the upheaval they long for. We want to amend the State Sports Facilities Act so that known neo-Nazis are not allocated usage slots if they wish to train in public sports facilities. The tolerance of known and

convicted neo-Nazis in martial arts clubs must also lead to a review of the usage agreements between the state or districts and the clubs. We are strengthening civil society initiatives that defend sport as a school of democracy and diversity.

Parliamentary inquiry into far-right structures and violence

The work of the select committee investigating the series of far-right attacks in Neukölln ('the Neukölln complex') has revealed a shocking extent of investigative failings, misconduct within the judiciary and the involvement of public officials in the far-right scene. Only a fraction of the offences have been solved and resulted in convictions. This is unacceptable. The relevant authorities and democratic parties owe it to those affected and to the public to continue the investigations during the next parliamentary term.

Many questions regarding the links between the NSU's series of right-wing terrorist attacks and Berlin also remain unanswered. And many threads converge in Berlin. For a long time, Berlin neo-Nazis have been and continue to be involved in various other organisations on the militant to terrorist far-right spectrum.

We call for the establishment of a committee of inquiry, modelled on those in other federal states, to investigate NSU links as well as other militant far-right and right-wing terrorist structures in Berlin.

Following years of campaigning by Die Linke and many civil society actors, a commission of inquiry into anti-Semitism, racism and Islamophobia was finally established by the House of Representatives in the spring of 2025. Due to racist outbursts by individual commission members from the CDU and the political and financial pressure to which those giving evidence and experts were subjected, the commission was unable to complete its work in an appropriate manner. In view of the rise in racist and anti-Semitic attacks, this work must be resumed as a matter of urgency.

In doing so, the affected communities and civil society actors must be better involved and their expertise taken into account.

Anti-fascist culture of remembrance

A culture of remembrance is not merely an integral part of political education. Through its enlightening and cautionary effect, it represents a key instrument in the fight against fascism and other ideologies that disregard human dignity. We call for the preservation and strengthening of an anti-fascist culture of remembrance. This means upholding the memory of the victims of fascism and the Shoah. It also means remembering the division of the city. At the same time, however, the focus must be on developing a post-migrant perspective and a comprehensive culture of remembrance that recognises the diversity of Berlin's population. We therefore call for the reappraisal of German colonialism to be reinstated in the federal government's memorial policy, which particularly affects the State of Berlin.

As the federal capital, Berlin finds itself in the unique position of having to honour both local and national remembrance in equal measure. Given the equal funding of national institutions, these are doubly at risk in the face of the threat of AfD governments, both at state and federal level. The funding of the most important institutions should therefore be enshrined in the state constitution on the basis of the tasks they fulfil. This would secure the long-term future of important memorial sites, including the 'Topography of Terror' and the House of the Wannsee Conference. Furthermore, it would enable the creation of a memorial to German colonialism to be initiated and implemented. In order to guarantee the independence of these institutions beyond mere funding, consideration should also be given to transferring them to public-law bodies.

Successful educational work in the field of remembrance culture depends on many volunteers, to whom we owe a great debt of gratitude. It also relies on good, motivated staff and appropriate facilities. The range of services must be expanded in line with needs, and staffing levels must be increased, particularly in the area of knowledge transfer. We aim to bring the

We aim to bring the working conditions of teaching staff into line with those of academic staff. Successful historical and political education relies on a high-calibre and motivated workforce and appropriate resources. The range of courses on offer must be expanded in line with demand, and staffing levels must be increased, particularly in the area of knowledge transfer. We aim to bring the working conditions of teaching staff into line with those of academic staff, and to bring those of freelancers into line with those of permanent staff. In addition, we will create a post to provide needs-based support for small, local memorial projects at district and neighbourhood level.

We want to establish and expand memorial sites to commemorate groups of victims of fascism who have been neglected until now. This includes the expansion of the Schöneeweide Documentation Centre for Nazi Forced Labour and the establishment of a memorial site for victims of German occupation policy and the war of extermination in Eastern Europe, as well as a memorial site for the so-called 'anti-social elements and career criminals' who were persecuted and murdered under fascism. In view of the current resurgence of antiziganism, we call with particular urgency for the protection and full preservation of the memorial to the Sinti and Roma murdered under fascism. In all these projects, organisations working in this field and associations representing those affected must be involved in the planning and design from the very outset. The latter in particular – in which the second and third generations of descendants are now organised – have been entrusted by the victims and survivors of the crimes of National Socialism with both the mandate and the burden of speaking on their behalf, as they themselves are no longer able to do so. We acknowledge this.

Furthermore, the successful establishment of a memorial to German colonialism also depends directly on the active involvement of the descendants of those affected, who have been organising themselves for many years in anti-racist, post-colonial and decolonial initiatives and associations. We also recognise their mandate in the development of a decolonial culture of remembrance.

Alongside the institutionalised memorial sites, we also recognise the extensive commitment of civil society. Above all, the diverse range of smaller memorial sites and initiatives are largely

partly supported by volunteers, to whom we owe a debt of immense gratitude. We intend to continue involving the various initiatives and associations in this field – some of which have many years' experience – in the further development of concepts relating to remembrance policy, for example through the district commemorative plaque commissions.

Die Linke is campaigning for 8 May to be declared a public holiday as the international day of remembrance for the liberation from fascism.

Die Linke

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