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## **Towards a new Programme of Fundamental Principles of the German CDU**

### **I.**

Under the leadership of our new Chairman Friedrich Merz, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) of Germany has developed a new programme of our Fundamental Principles. This programme will describe our visions and our plan for Germany for the next 10 to 15 years.

Where do we stand?

Making the seemingly impossible possible - that is the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. In the ruins of the German catastrophe, courageous women and men believed in a better future and founded the Christian Democratic Union of Germany as the people's party of the centre. Even during difficult times, it is important to have and to radiate confidence and faith, which are essential characteristics of the CDU.

Three quarters of a century later, Germany is a strong and respected country, which bears major responsibilities for Europe and the world. Five Federal Chancellors from the ranks of the CDU Konrad Adenauer, Ludwig Erhard, Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Helmut Kohl and Angela Merkel have decisively shaped our country: the Basic Law, the democratic state that operates under the rule of law, the social market economy and "prosperity for all", the consolidation of Germany ties to the West and reconciliation, the unification of Europe and German unity formed a decisive course that for decades enabled us to live in peace, freedom and prosperity for decades.

However, our lives and our ideals are under threat: by war in Europe, by enemies of the open society and liberal democracy, by climate change, species extinction and environmental destruction. At the same time, people feel challenged by global changes, digitalisation, demographic change and increasingly complex challenges, and they are concerned about prosperity, security and freedom. Fears of the future and uncertainty are spreading, which are weakening social cohesion.

The CDU sees itself as a political force that values people and inspires them to strive for a better tomorrow. We want to meet the challenges of our time with confidence, creative power and trust. The CDU wants to provide security in this new era, in order to display a positive vision of the future. We want to take responsibility for the good of all. Today, just as we did in the past, we are building on our stable and timeless foundation of values. Freedom, solidarity and justice remain the principle values of our policy in the 21st century, which guide us in our responsibilities:

For us freedom lies in the responsibilities for oneself, the community and nature. It combines the development opportunities of the individual with the commitment to the common good and the responsibility between generations. It generates a willingness to perform and a prospect for different ways of life, a diversity that we respect and want to protect.

Solidarity is a commandment of love for one's neighbour that corresponds with the social nature of human beings. It is based on reciprocity and is the foundation of claims as well as duties. Solidarity through the community is needed where individuals and small communities are no longer able to act on their own.

In a just society, all people can develop their abilities and participate adequately in it: Women and men, young and old, rich and poor, strong and weak, high achievers and the underprivileged. A just society recognises the achievements of the individual and ensures that what is earned is appropriate distribution, even across generations.

We in the CDU combine trust and confidence with realism and humility: human beings are not the creators of the world. However, we need to take care of our earth nonetheless; therefore, we make sustainable policies for our children and grandchildren. The preservation of creation is one of our central concerns. We want to enable all people to lead a fulfilling life.

We in the CDU combine seemingly contradictory things and divergences: social security and freedom of the market economy, responsibility for the community and the freedom of the individual, economy and ecology, promise of prosperity and climate neutrality, preservation of the German state in its democratic form, European integration and international involvement, love for the own country and openness to the world, shaping the homeland and commitment to the world, value orientation and realpolitik.

We in the CDU want to change people's lives for the better. We rely on the renewal of our community and the willingness of the people to pursue new paths. We want to shape change in ways that benefits everyone. By combining opposites and bringing together the most diverse ways of life, the CDU is the party of the people of the centre, a party of the many and not a representative of the interests of a few.

In the effort to live up to this claim again and again, to reaffirm the people in the face of the constantly changing realities and to adapt them to the changing realities, that is the mission, which the CDU has set for itself with its fourth programme of principles. The guiding principle for this is our Charter of Fundamental Values.

## II.

What defines us?

The basis of Christian Democratic politics is the Christian understanding of the human being. At the centre is the inviolable dignity of the human being. Every human being is wanted, unique, unrepeatable and should live freely and self-determined. This image of the human being guides our political action. At the same time, the CDU has a traditional commitment to the Enlightenment and is open to all people who - irrespective of their own religious belief - share its basic values.

We oppose all efforts to discriminate people, ascribing different values to people on the basis of whatever characteristics. The love of the human being from the beginning to the end of life is the fundamental claim of our policy.

We regard all people as equal of value, while at the same time recognising the individual differences of everyone. We therefore affirm pluralism and diversity, which arise from the

possibilities of free self-development and equality of opportunity. Providing fair and real opportunities to everyone is a central concern of our politics and our key to a just society.

We believe that the Christian worldview provides a good foundation for our policies, that focus on the individual person and combines individual freedom with responsibility for others. This concept distinguishes us from libertarian individualism, in which the sole focus is on the individual claim to freedom. It also distinguishes us from identity politics, which divides a community into opposing groups, as well as from socialist groups or ethnic and nationalist thinking that ideologically gives the collective precedence over the individual. For us, the state is there to provide for the people and not the other way around.

We are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the human being and therefore uphold a calm scepticism towards absolutist ideas, supposed unambiguity and radical solutions. Because we know: Politics only gives penultimate answers. We rely on common sense, which connects conflicting interests and weighs up conflicting objectives pragmatically and responsibly. Because we are convinced that this is the core of a philanthropic policy that seeks a just middle ground.

Based on the Christian image of humanity, the German CDU traditionally unites social, liberal and conservative attitudes and concerns. They are the roots of our self-conception. Reconciling them repeatedly, leads to a policy of moderation and middle ground.

We as the CDU are Christian-social, because we see the humans as a social and individual being. The responsibility for oneself and the obligation to those who are dependent on support, form the basis of the principle of subsidiarity and of Christian Democratic social thinking. It brings together a balance of individual freedom and social solidarity, individual responsibility and the welfare state.

We as the CDU are liberal because we believe in the freedom and the responsibility of the individual. We appreciate and encourage creativity, which improves people's lives day by day. Because of our liberal self-image, we are committed to the primacy of the law and the separation of powers, to societal pluralism and diversity, and to freedom in responsibility in a market economy, science, culture and civil society.

We as the CDU are conservative because we see the present and the future in connection to our traditions, cultural and experience of our civilisation. We follow principles and constantly reassess where we need to change. With this basic attitude, we can preserve what has been tried and tested without becoming rigid, and shape the future without rushing to follow the spirit of the times. With this understanding, we stand up for law and order, sustainability and climate protection, for education, social equality and career opportunities for all. Through this approach, we preserve freedom, security and homeland for the people. We stand for open-minded patriotism, which invites people to join in instead of excluding them.

Social, liberal and conservative syndicate to form something unique, which shapes Christian Democratic policy and distinguishes it from other political concepts. Our policy combines self-responsibility and subsidiarity, freedom and pluralism, solidarity and justice, the rule of law and appreciation of the institutions, social market economy and regulatory policy, economy and ecology, competitiveness and openness to technology. In this way, it stands for a policy that is in the best sense civic, open-minded and future-oriented.

### III.

We as the CDU are civic because we stand for an open society of citizens. It is based on the readiness and the will to belong to our country and its values and to stand up for them. Civic politics invites and does not exclude. It stands for a promise to be able to contribute and for opportunities for advancement in Germany, for social integration and self-determination, for social integration and self-determination, for family orientation and the support of relationships and bonds between people.

However, this promise is not yet a reality for everyone when they are discriminated based on their gender or sexual orientation, their ethnic or social origin, because of their faith or their age or because of other characteristics. We in the CDU oppose such discrimination, because it is contradict our convictions of equality and equality of opportunities. We are convinced that equal rights and fair opportunities for all are the key to justice.

Civic politics combines individualism and commitment to the common good, openness to the world and a sense of belonging to one's homeland. It puts trusts the people and inspires confidence in shaping the future. For a free society needs both democratically elected governments and politically responsible parliaments, as well as an active civil society. One cannot be replace the other.

Civic politics respects and strengthens governmental institutions and their tasks, but it does not exaggerate the state as an all-round provider or the sole problem solver. It wants to keep the promise of the state and renew it where necessary. It expects citizens of the state, to contribute to the success of our community, each to the best of his or her abilities.

Our values, our convictions and our confidence protect us from apocalyptic moods and claims to absoluteness. They give us the necessary serenity to analyse the challenges of our time, to find well thought-out, sustainable solutions and then implement them decisively. We meet threats from within and from the outside with confidence and fortitude, our openness and our connection to values are non-negotiable. We can overcome the crises of the present and shape a better future. We believe in our country and the strength of its people.

The CDU is and will remain the people's party. We trust in the idea of the people's party and its importance for our democracy - today and in the future. Especially in the digital age, in which the forums of opinion expressions and the forms of opinion forming are becoming increasingly confusing, it is important, for the sake of the bigger picture to bring different voices and interests together. More than ever, people's parties are therefore the place where the constitutional mandate to participate in the formation of the political decision-making can be fulfilled.

We are convinced that people's parties are the right answer to fragmentation; populism and polarisation. We are not limited to a single milieu nor to a specific issue. We see our mission and our obligation for democracy is rather to create a unifying party based on our values as a centrist party of the people, to create a unifying bond for the diversity of interests. We lead people of all genders, different origins and diverse professions, of different education and religion, of all ages and from different social environments and thus contribute to the stability of our community and to social solidarity. It is our aspiration as a future-oriented people's party,

to be a meaningful political home and to be open to all who wish to participate in shaping society within the framework of our values.

We want to continue to be a people's party with a credible, claim to shaping our country and Europe. It is and remains our task to represent the range and diversity of society in our party. The consideration of different talents and personalities, open opinion-forming processes, and fair and equitable interaction with each other are a prerequisite for this. Our aspiration is that in the CDU women and men - irrespective of their origin and age - shape politics in a spirit of partnership, and bring their interests to bear.

#### IV.

We in the CDU are working for a Germany in Europe,

- in which everyone can freely develop their talents and support each other,
- in which the free democratic basic order is lived and protected with enthusiasm,
- which combines the preservation of the natural foundations of life with social justice and economic strength and takes on a consistently sustainable development,
- in which the scientific and technological progress and the dynamic forces of the social and ecological market economy serve the people, the preservation of our livelihoods and general prosperity,
- which, with consistent climate protection, accelerates the path to climate neutrality and is committed to meeting ambitious climate targets internationally,
- that makes education, achievement and qualification possible for everyone,
- in which solidarity and intergenerational justice are self-evident and visible,
- in which people combine family, social commitment and work and can realise their individual goals in life,
- in which gender equality, in the shape of genuine equality of men and women is realised,
- which, being conscious of its history humbly but also confidently acknowledges universal values and especially the indivisible human rights,
- in which there is an open climate of opinion and the argument counts,
- which recognises and utilises the opportunities and possibilities of advancing digitalisation to the fullest extent,

- in which regional affiliations, identity and identification are respected and, with due regard for federalism and subsidiarity, equal living conditions and opportunities are created throughout the country,
- that as a powerfully shaping member of the European Union, as a strong and reliable transatlantic partner and as an active member of international organisations, takes up its responsibilities and stands by the side of like-minded nations.

Just like the women and men who founded our party 75 years ago, we also believe in a better future for Germany. We in the CDU want to shape this future - with courage, joy and confidence.