

6. A strong Europe

Germany's responsibilities in European policy

The construction of a united Europe remains Germany's most important task. Our European partners' expectations of Germany have changed over the last few years. The European Union (EU) is going through a period of economic, social and institutional changes and innovations that is unique in history. In this period of upheaval, Germany, as an economically strong Member State and an anchor of stability, has assumed greater responsibility and is the focus of specific expectations on the part of its partners.

In this situation, as a founding member of the EU and a trustworthy partner, our country must play a responsible role in Europe promoting integration. Germany will use and exhaust every opportunity to consolidate and further strengthen confidence in the sustainability of European unification. We will make every effort to overcome the crisis in Europe and to successfully move towards a politically and economically strong and socially just Europe. Sound and sustainable finances must be combined with growth and employment, and the necessary individual responsibility of the states must be reconciled with solidarity and democracy. For these tasks to be fulfilled, the EU needs Community institutions which are capable of acting.

A democratic Europe

The impact of decisions on European policy often extends far into the living conditions of our citizens. Therefore, to ensure that there is confidence in Europe and the EU, it is important to strengthen democratic legitimacy and to make EU decisions more transparent. This requires a strong role for the European Parliament just as much as close involvement of the national Parliaments. The European Commission needs a rigorous and efficient College with clear competences for the Commissioners.

It is important, particularly for acceptance of crisis management in the euro area, that this is embedded in the democratic structures of the EU and in the proven interaction of the Commission, Council, European Parliament and the Member States. The Community method is at the centre of European unification. Where some states are forging ahead with integration, the aim should be to bring these policy areas under the umbrella of the European treaties as quickly as possible with the inclusion of all EU Members.

The German Government supports the introduction of a uniform European franchise, in order to ensure reliable majorities in the European Parliament for the stability of the legislative procedures of the Union. In this respect, an appropriate minimum threshold should be established for the allocation of seats.

The development of a European civil society is essential for a lively European democracy. It is particularly important also to develop youth policy to this end.

European schools, youth services and increased mobility of young people can contribute to this. In this respect, for example, we are supporting the setting-up of a German-Greek youth foundation. The reform efforts in Greece continue to be supported in partnership, and in particular the German-Greek Assembly is being continued and developed further.

In order for citizens to accept closer integration in Europe more readily, it is essential for the subsidiarity principle to be strictly observed. Under it, the EU takes action only if and in so far as action by the Member States would not be sufficient. Tasks must be located at the level where they can best be carried out: European, national, regional or local. Furthermore, EU legal instruments must be judged in the light of the principle of proportionality.

We want to achieve a citizen-oriented Europe which respects local self-government. The languages and cultures in the municipalities and regions make a fundamental contribution to the diversity of Europe, with which people identify. We believe that the EU should preserve the independence and diverse traditions of all Member States. The EU must concentrate, above all, on the major tasks of the future. In these areas, we need a strong and democratic Europe which acts in a unified way.

Use of the German language in the European institutions must reflect its legal position and its actual use in the EU. German must also be put on an equal footing in practice with the two other languages used in proceedings, English and French.

Challenges – Europe's way out of the crisis

We will do everything in our power to ensure that Europe emerges stronger from the current crisis. We are firmly convinced that this is possible if Europe holds together and responds in a comprehensive political manner to the challenges in the euro area. The causes of the crisis are diverse; they extend from over-indebtedness of individual European states, via deficiencies in competitiveness, economic imbalances and structural defects in the European Economic and Monetary Union, to distortions on the financial markets.

The prospects for growth have recently brightened. However, the crisis has left deep scars and is still far from overcome. Unemployment continues to be unsustainably high in many Member States, particularly among young people. Many small and medium-sized firms cannot fund investment, and the combination of high debt levels and weak growth continues to make Europe's national economies vulnerable.

For Europe to find a way permanently out of the crisis requires a comprehensive political approach combining structural reforms for more competitiveness and strict sustainable budgetary consolidation with future investment in growth and employment in a socially balanced way.

The aim in further European crisis management must be to overcome the mutual dependence between private indebtedness of banks and public indebtedness of states and also to ensure that, first and foremost, the banks themselves are liable for their risks in future and not the taxpayers. In addition, the rules for banks and financial markets must be changed further so that, in the future, financial market operators are never again able to jeopardise the prosperity of states and companies. The financial markets must make a contribution towards meeting the costs of the crisis and must ultimately return to their role of serving the real economy.

In addition, there must be further reforms to strengthen coordination of economic policy, particularly in the Economic and Monetary Union. The tried and tested rules of the social market economy must provide the basic framework for the Economic and Monetary Union of the future.

Development of the Economic and Monetary Union

The crisis in the euro area has exposed the structural defects in the European Economic and Monetary Union. In particular, it has become clear that the Economic and Monetary Union requires better and more binding coordination of its economic policy and a more effective budgetary policy in order to combine competitiveness, financial stability, the possibility of future investment and social balance sustainably and successfully. In dialogue with its European partners, Germany will advocate the further development of the Economic and Monetary Union in this sense. Community institutions should be involved in economic coordination as part of their institutional role.

Germany stands by the single currency. Our aim is and remains to lead a strengthened Europe out of the crisis – for a Europe of stability and growth. At the same time, our principle is: solidarity and the willingness to shoulder responsibility go together. We Europeans must also hold our own in global competition through a more efficient economy.

Improved competitiveness through structural reforms and sustainable future investment are Europe's keys to growth. National and European efforts must go hand in hand. We are committed to the rules of the strengthened Stability and Growth Pact. Credible application of these is the foundation for a stable single currency on a sustainable basis.

The credibility of our action calls for a budgetary and economic policy based on sustainability criteria. The high government debt ratios of the euro countries must therefore be reduced. That is one of the lessons from the current crisis. The policy of budgetary consolidation must be continued and must be combined with reforms for structural growth and sustainable future investment.

Germany continues to be ready to provide support and solidarity, for example in the form of assistance loans and technical assistance, in order to facilitate reform policies in the recipient countries to recover competitiveness and reduce unemployment.

However, the principle that each Member State is itself liable for its debts must be maintained. Any form of mutualisation of state debts would jeopardise the necessary alignment of national policies in each individual Member State. National budget responsibility and supranational, joint liability are irreconcilable. Assistance loans from European rescue programmes must be granted only as a last resort, when the stability of the eurozone as a whole is jeopardised. We want the crisis states to make a strong contribution themselves to the crisis management and to use their own resources before receiving assistance loans. These should be granted only in return for strict conditions and/or reforms and consolidation measures by the recipient countries. They require a clear plan as to how debt sustainability can be guaranteed. Furthermore, democratic control of all assistance is of prime importance: ESM funds will continue to be approved only with the agreement of the Bundestag.

This crisis has shown that European corrections often take effect too late. To avoid future rifts in the monetary union, therefore, budget policies and debt development must be monitored better and economic imbalances in the eurozone must be reduced through coordinated efforts by all Member States of the euro. To this end, we must make consistent use of the strengthened Stability and Growth Pact and the Excessive Imbalance Procedure.

The new rules can be credible only if they are applied and monitored consistently. The use of an EU scoreboard for employment and social trends and of employment and social indicators should be continued, so that these new instruments can already be applied for the 2014 European Semester. With this wider range of indicators, it should be possible to achieve a broader understanding of social trends EU-wide.

We want the surveillance of national budgetary planning by the EU Commission, which has already been introduced in the Two-Pack, to be developed into an effective instrument which enables a national body legislating for the budget to take countermeasures at an early stage in the case of clear infringements of EU rules. That also includes targets for growth, innovation and employment.

We are working to ensure that the euro states conclude binding and enforceable, democratically authorised, contractual agreements for reform with the European level, which focus on achieving the objectives of competitiveness, sound and sustainable finances, growth and employment combined with solidarity.

We will adapt the contractual basis of the Economic and Monetary Union.

The reforms introduced in the eurozone states particularly affected by the crisis are an important basis for creating sustainable growth there and for Europe as a whole. In this respect it is also necessary to use the opportunities of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the EU budget including the EU structural funds in a targeted way to build the necessary infrastructure. Furthermore, the opportunities for access to credit for small and medium-sized firms should be significantly improved.

The EIB in cooperation with national development banks can help here too. This tool box should be used to strengthen economic development, increase employment and reduce fragmentation of the financial markets in Europe.

Competitiveness and employment

The internal market is a cornerstone for securing growth and the competitiveness of Europe. Its full effect must be allowed to develop, and it must be further strengthened. Completion of the internal market, the establishment of appropriate rules, but also mutual recognition of educational certificates and qualifications as well as the portability of social support in the EU, can provide significant impetus for growth.

Permanent new jobs can be created and prosperity secured mainly through competitiveness, robust structural economic growth and investment in the future. This applies especially in the crisis countries of the euro area, where unemployment is much too high and people have often experienced painful cuts in income in the crisis, in many cases even losing their jobs.

We will work to develop the policy of budgetary consolidation and structural reforms consistently with due regard for social compatibility and to supplement this with increased future investment in innovation and growth.

We will continue to improve the economic climate, in order to create high-value production and employment with good income. The prudent cooperation of the private sector, with its dynamism and efficiency, and the state, through the regulatory framework of the social market economy, through education and through infrastructure, contributes to the attainment of this objective. This applies at national and European level, according to responsibility.

To make Europe fit for the future, we need higher investment in, for example, infrastructure, renewable energies, energy efficiency, transport, trans-European networks, digital media or broadband provision, education and also research and development, as well as necessary structural reforms.

We will press for the Compact for Growth and Jobs adopted in summer 2012 (EUR 120 billion) to be vigorously implemented. The growth pact and fiscal compact are equally important components of a policy for sustainable growth and sound public budgets. Measures which make it easier for small and medium-sized firms to access funds are particularly important for promoting growth and employment. Such measures include increased lending by the EIB as well as greater use of revolving funds to utilise the resources of the structural and investment funds.

The German Government will ensure that the EIB uses the additional funds allocated to it effectively and widely. The instrument for introducing greater

flexibility, provided for in the agreements on medium-term financial planning, should be used for investment, growth and employment.

As part of thrifty EU budgetary management, we are working to ensure that the structure of the EU budget is more in line with tasks. With a view to revision of the multiannual financial framework in 2016, further steps must be taken towards setting clear priorities in the European budget for growth, jobs and innovation.

The German Government will work at European level to get the pilot phase of European project bonds evaluated as early as possible. Additional investment to promote growth can be stimulated with provision of cover for project bonds from the EU budget.

Europe is the cradle of the modern industrial society, but industry has become weaker in extensive parts of Europe. The EU has since recognised the importance of industry for sustainable growth, prosperity, quality of life and jobs as well as the problem of deindustrialisation in Europe. However, it has not yet managed to reverse the negative trend. Because of the great importance of a strong European industry, we will work together with the European institutions and partners towards making the EU home to a strong and modern industry again in the future. To this end, we must and we will improve site conditions for industry across all ministries, take account of industry's international competitiveness in political decisions in Berlin and Brussels and pay more attention to the cost efficiency of our decisions regarding industrial policy.

Higher private and public investment in research, development and innovation, in good training systems, improved export promotion, especially in countries with low export ratios, a modern infrastructure geared to industrial needs and a conducive regulatory framework in the European internal market are also particularly important in Europe.

To strengthen Europe's competitiveness it is necessary for the regulatory burden at EU level to be reduced. The European Commission must identify regulatory areas which offer the greatest potential for simplifying and reducing the costs of regulation, particularly where they are relevant for small and medium-sized firms. We are calling for specific reduction targets in these areas. Consumer, environmental and employee protection must be taken into account in this. In principle, we want to implement EU guidelines on a "one-to-one" basis – that also ensures equal opportunities in the European internal market.

The transformation of Germany's energy system must also be considered in the European context. Only an integrated internal energy market and close coordination between Member States, e.g. in the development of renewable energies and transport networks, guarantee a reliable, affordable and sustainable energy supply, so that Germany remains a driving force in Europe as a competitive business and industrial location in the long term.

The role that Europe will play in the 21st century depends crucially on whether we manage to keep up in the digital world, set European standards and, in this way, preserve our European social model. Therefore, we are committed to a comprehensive European digital agenda to reconcile consumer protection, data protection, innovation, networks and information security.

It is also necessary to have a new international legal framework for handling our data. Our goal is an international convention for the worldwide protection of freedom and of personal integrity on the internet. The current revision of the European data protection rules must be pushed ahead resolutely. On this basis, we also want to negotiate the data protection convention quickly with the United States.

When coordinating our economic policy in a European context, we shall also keep the global dimension firmly in view. For example, we will promote the conclusion of a free trade agreement with the United States. We will deal with the challenge of increasing global competition between enterprises and locations, by focusing on the tried and tested broad lines of our social market economy and by attaching high priority to safeguarding the international competitiveness of our German and European economy. In a rapidly changing world, only a strong Europe can retain its influence in future. For this too, we need sustainable management and a high level of economic and social stability.

German European policy takes the specific need to protect culture and media into account, particularly in the drafting of European law, in EU aid issues and in free trade agreements with third states. This must also be taken into consideration and safeguarded in the negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EU and the United States by means of derogations.

Strengthening the social dimension, creating jobs, combating youth unemployment

Experience of the crisis teaches us once again that the greatest threat to people and social peace in Europe is the loss of jobs. Therefore, the best and, in the long term, only successful way to secure income, personal participation and social integration and stability, is to overcome unemployment and create sufficiently skilled, long-term competitive jobs. Individual responsibility and private initiative to work and to create work as an entrepreneur require additional support and solidarity. This is also reflected in the European strategy based on solidarity and solidity: just like future investment, structural reforms by Member States and budgetary consolidation are an important basis for growth and jobs and so also for the social integration of citizens.

Unemployment among young people has risen dramatically in many European countries as a result of the crisis. These young people, who are often well educated, must not be abandoned by Europe. Thus, combating youth unemployment must be a priority of European policy.

Germany will set a good example by implementing the agreed European youth guarantee. Successful implementation in all Member States requires adequate financial underpinning to enable the necessary structures to be set up in the hardest hit countries. We welcome a quality framework for practical training. The German Government will work for verifiable targets for combating youth unemployment in the European Semester. National parliaments and the European Parliament should perform their role in this.

The funds provided as part of the youth employment initiative in the next European budget must be used as quickly as possible, and in any case in the first two years of the next financial period. The funds for combating youth unemployment can be increased, if necessary, within the scope of the already agreed re-programming of the European structural fund and also through pooling of budgetary resources that are still available. We support initiatives regarding technical assistance in the call for and input of funds. We expressly welcome the financing of investment in education and training and temporary subsidies for labour costs through loans and guarantees by the EIB, and we advocate greater combining of EIB loans and European funds. The opportunities offered by the “Erasmus for all” programme for dual training should be used to the full and more effectively.

We will also promote a common European labour market through better teaching of languages and greater portability of educational qualifications and social security.

We are working to ensure that mobility and permeability are reinforced in a common European education and labour market. We are taking targeted measures which make it easier for qualified young people from other Member States to complete their vocational training in Germany and/or to take up a job in Germany.

In addition, we want to help other Member States – with the involvement of the chamber organisations – to introduce the successful German system of dual training including the master’s certificate and to contribute to the successful implementation of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

In order to create additional training posts and jobs we are working for a joint action by enterprises, trade unions and the Member States of the European Union. We can contribute our experience with the “Training Pact” in Germany to this cooperation. Programmes for start-up businesses should also be developed – along the lines of the German start-up grant. These programmes should be accompanied by comprehensive advice.

With regard to the Member States’ primary competence for social policy, the EU respects national traditions. We support the development of joint principles and criteria to combat wage and social dumping within the scope of the European economic and social model, in order to counter distortions of competition which are detrimental to companies and workers in the internal market.

Employees in Europe must be given more effective protection against exploitation and illegal working conditions. Where economic activity takes place across borders, employee rights should not stop at the borders. We are committed to examining the introduction of standards for minimum pay, which should be arranged and defined at national level and which would guarantee a high level of employment and fair pay – with a choice between legislation and collective agreements.

Similarly, it is necessary to ensure that the equal status of fundamental social rights arising from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in relation to the market freedoms is implemented in the European single market. The social dialogue between the two sides of industry has an important function at European level, which should be reinforced, as should the European works councils and co-determination in European companies.

In the negotiations currently underway regarding the directive implementing the Posted Workers Directive, we advocate the high level applicable in Germany, with clear liability rules, comprehensive rights of the authorities to information as well as effective supervisory rights for Member States. The erosion of supervisory powers must not be allowed to make it more difficult to combat possible abuse. For example, abuse by letter box companies and sham postings must be resolutely countered. European law on posting should be developed further so that the level of pay, i.e. equal pay for the same work, and working conditions of the relevant country of destination are applicable. The provision of public services, in particular the provision at regional and municipal level (e.g. water supply), is one of the core state tasks. Demographic change and the decline in population in many rural areas heighten the need for action in this field.

There must be a balance between the principle of competition in the EU single market, a functioning community and social balance; acceptance by citizens can only be achieved in this way. The possibilities for Member States, their regions and municipalities to organise their public-interest tasks must be maintained. We will vigorously oppose any further restriction of the provision of public services as a result of EU policies. National, regional and local characteristics of public service provision must not be undermined by European policy.

European foreign and security policy

We want a strong and self-confident European Union which makes a decisive contribution to shaping the globalisation process and is committed to safeguarding peace, freedom and prosperity. Germany will actively contribute to strengthening confidence in the construction of a united Europe. Cooperation based on trust between the partners is essential for joint success. Consideration for the interests of small and medium-sized Member States is a constituent part of our European policy.

The credibility of the European Union in its international commitment to human rights depends crucially on how consistently it applies its values and punishes infringement of them internally. Based on Article 7 TEU, the German Government supports an effective mechanism for maintaining democratic standards based on the rule of law in Europe, in order to guarantee protection of the values embodied in Article 2 TEU.

The Franco-German partnership is unique in its breadth and depth. Our countries, as strong economies, have a particular interest in, but also special opportunities for, providing substantial support for European unification and strengthening the prosperity, security and competitiveness of the EU. We will continue to implement step by step the Franco-German agenda agreed on 22 January 2013, further strengthen our partnership with Poland and develop the diverse relations with our neighbours. We shall expand the work opportunities of the German-Polish Youth Office and provide for the long-term future of the Youth Meeting Centre in Krzyzowa and Auschwitz. We will intensify cooperation with France and Poland in the Weimar Triangle. We want to expand the bilateral initiatives with our central European partners. We will secure a future for the German-Czech Discussion Forum and the German-Czech Future Fund beyond 2017.

Enlargement and our Eastern neighbours

Enlargement of the EU is active European peace policy. Previous EU enlargements have been in the interests of Germany and Europe. We are committed to continuation of this process subject to strict observance of the accession criteria and to the prospect of accession for states in the Western Balkans. Both Serbia and Kosovo must comply with the obligations they have entered into. We want to reduce the Kosovo peacekeeping force gradually in line with security developments and to bring it to an end. Together with our partners and allies, we will actively promote accession of the countries in the Western Balkans to the EU and NATO. EU enlargement requires strict criteria and clearly verifiable progress. Both the capacity of the candidates for accession and the capacity of the European Union to absorb them are crucial.

Turkey is strategically and economically important for Europe. In addition, we are closely connected with Turkey as a result of diverse ties between the people in both our countries. We should like to strengthen relations between the European Union and Turkey further, including close strategic cooperation in matters of foreign and security policy. We not only recognise the impressive economic development of Turkey, but welcome in particular the reform efforts made with a view to accession negotiations. The negotiating process is continuing with the opening of new negotiating chapters. The unconditional respect for the values on which the EU is based, such as democracy, the rule of law as well as freedom of religion and of opinion, and internal implementation of them, are essential for further progress. The negotiations started in 2005 with a view to accession are an open-ended process which is by no means a foregone conclusion and the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed in advance. The issue of EU membership is also the subject of discussion in Turkey. Should the EU be unable to admit Turkey or should Turkey not be in a

position to meet all of the obligations attached to full membership, Turkey must be tied as closely as possible to the European structures in a way which continues to develop its privileged relations with the EU and Germany.

It is in the vital interests of Germany and the EU to promote stability, democracy, the rule of law and economic development in the other neighbouring regions as well. In this respect, the European Neighbourhood Policy has proved its worth. Association, free-trade and visa facilitation agreements remain the best instruments for the Eastern Partnership.

The neighbouring countries on the southern and eastern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea are of strategic importance for Europe. Closer ties between these states and the EU can contribute to stabilisation of the region.

A strong Europe in the world

We want the European Union as winner of the Nobel peace prize to live up to its responsibility in the future. It must help to shape international policy in the globalised world of the 21st century and play a strong and independent role in this respect. Following the EU summit in December 2013, the German Government will take new political initiatives to strengthen and reinforce the Common Foreign and Security Policy. As a rule, the European Council should deal with foreign, security and defence policy once a year at the level of the heads of state and government.

We are working to strengthen the office of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The capacity of the European External Action Service (EEAS) to act in the form of preventive crisis management and rapid response to a crisis must be improved. The task of a slimmed-down EEAS is functional and not predominantly representative. Foreign policy issues, trade policy and development cooperation must be more effectively linked and more closely coordinated between the European Commission and the EEAS.

More than ever, the European Union needs to have a strategic discussion about what it can and wants to achieve with primarily civilian assets or, where appropriate, military operations. The European Union and its Member States can provide valuable assistance in establishing democracy, systems based on the rule of law and efficient administration in third countries. That applies particularly to the fields of the police and justice.

We are committed to establishing further links between the civilian and military instruments of the European Union and also improving Europe's civilian and military capabilities for crisis prevention and conflict settlement. Force planning in the European Union and NATO should be coordinated more closely with each other. Duplication should be avoided. NATO and EU capabilities must be complementary.

We want joint European operations to safeguard and strengthen security in Europe to be conducted in our geographic neighbourhood as a matter of priority. Operations outside this neighbourhood should be transferred increasingly to regional partners and organisations, for example the African Union

(AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). These and other regional organisations and also reliable partners on the ground must be supported when assuming responsibility.

The OSCE and the Council of Europe

We want to strengthen the OSCE. The German Government declares in consultation with the OSCE partner nations, in particular Poland and France, that it is prepared to shoulder more responsibility in the OSCE. We want the Council of Europe and its institutions to remember their core competence as custodian and guardian of fundamental basic and human rights. We intend to work rigorously towards that.

7. Shouldering responsibility in the world

A dependable partner in the world

Germany meets its international responsibilities. We want to play an active role in shaping the global order. The interests and values of our country guide us in this pursuit. Germany works worldwide for peace, freedom and security; for a just world order, human rights enforcement and the application of international law; for sustainable development; and for the alleviation of poverty.

Whatever contributions from our country are expected to help resolve crises and conflicts, we stand prepared. In doing so, we set great store by the tools of diplomacy, peaceful conflict resolution and development cooperation. We are dependable and loyal to our alliances. We want to act as a good partner in the shaping of a just world order.

Strengthening NATO and the transatlantic partnership

Transatlantic cooperation is of fundamental importance for both Europe and North America. The transatlantic partnership rests on a foundation of shared values and interests; it has been and remains the key to freedom, security and prosperity for all. Trust must be restored in areas in which it has been called into question recently. In this endeavour, we expect both a clear commitment and corresponding action on the part of the US Administration. We want to define the rules of interaction between partners more clearly, and we seek credible and verifiable agreements that will protect the privacy of our citizens.

The planned free trade agreement with the United States is one of the central projects in the deepening of transatlantic relations. We want the negotiations to be successfully concluded without the agreement challenging parliamentary oversight or judicial protection. Our aim is to remove as many existing impediments to transatlantic trade and investment relations as possible. The agreement must permit justified exceptions for every contracting party. We will set great store by ensuring the European Union's standards of protection, especially in the areas of data protection; European social, environmental and food safety standards; and the protection of consumer rights and the provision of public services, as well as culture and media.

We are committed to NATO and its new Strategic Concept. The transatlantic Alliance is and shall remain the key foundation of our security and defence policy in light of the new risks and threats of a globalised world. It is the organisation in which the transatlantic partners consult on and coordinate their strategic ideas on security policy on an equal footing. We contribute actively to the Alliance and in this way work to ensure that the ties between North America and Europe remain viable and are strengthened. Germany will continue to reliably bear its appropriate share of the Alliance's burden. Together with our NATO partners, we are rigorously implementing the Chicago decisions on the strategic reorientation of the Alliance.

We support defence cooperation based on the Smart Defence initiative, for joint planning, acquisition and provision of military capabilities and for maintaining the interoperability of armed forces in the Alliance. As a framework nation, Germany is prepared to furnish capabilities for the Alliance together with other NATO partners.

We want to continue using the instrument of the NATO-Russia Council and we want to strengthen the strategic value of this body. In particular, the withdrawal of ISAF troops from Afghanistan has shown that cooperation between NATO and Russia is possible and in our mutual interest. These positive experiences should also be used for other security policy challenges such as the talks on the development of a NATO missile defence system. The German Government stands by its Alliance commitments and will contribute its part to the establishment of NATO missile defence, which we need for effective protection from the threat of missiles in the hands of high-risk countries. In this area the German Government will seek shared cooperative solutions with its NATO partners which will not spark new tensions or arms races.

Open dialogue and broader cooperation with Russia

Germany and Russia are closely linked with each other through a chequered history. Russia is the biggest and most important neighbour of the European Union. A modern, economically strong and democratic Russia is in the interests of both Germany and Europe. We want to expand the partnership for modernisation to additional areas in order to make social, political and economic progress. We will speak openly with the Russian leadership about our different ideas of a partnership for modernisation.

We welcome and support the many efforts to widen and strengthen relations at national and civil society level. We shall seek to develop the Petersburg Dialogue further. Beyond this, we want to initiate new forms of social dialogue with Russia and to intensify bilateral contacts with representatives of Russia's new middle class and civil society. Russia is called upon to respect the rule of law and democratic standards to which it has committed itself internationally. This also applies to the fulfilment of WTO obligations.

We are seeking further liberalisation of visa rules for entrepreneurs, scientists and scholars, civil society players and students. We want to put Russian and Eastern European competence in Germany on a sound footing. To this end, we want to strengthen scientific and analytical expertise about this region.

We will work for greater coherence in the European Union's policy on Russia. We will also continue to pursue the goals of a new partnership agreement between the European Union and Russia, the expansion of cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and the strengthening of cooperation on foreign and security policy.

The deepening of the trilateral dialogue among Germany, Poland and Russia has a key role in this. In shaping our relations with Russia, we want to take into account the legitimate interests of our mutual neighbours.

Security in Europe and for Europe can only be achieved with Russia, not against it. Above all, we want to move forward with Russia on the resolution of conflicts in our neighbouring countries and expect progress on the issue of Transdniestria in particular.

Fresh impetus for disarmament and arms control

Disarmament and arms control policy are an important element of German foreign and security policy. Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation make a fundamental contribution to peace and also to our safety and stability. We are committed to general and worldwide disarmament and arms control of conventional weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction.

At the Chicago summit, we, together with our NATO partners, set the goal of establishing the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons and, until this is achieved, reducing the role of nuclear weapons. As long as nuclear weapons play a role as an instrument of deterrence in NATO's Strategic Concept, Germany has an interest in taking part in the strategic discussions and planning processes.

The German Government will work for a start to negotiations between the US and Russia on verifiable and complete disarmament in the area of substrategic arms, and will actively support both partners' steps in this direction. Successful disarmament talks are a necessary pre-condition for the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons stationed in Germany and Europe.

At the same time, conventional disarmament and arms control in Europe needs a fresh political momentum. Beyond the CFE Treaty, we will work for the modernisation of Europe's arms control architecture on a verifiable and transparent basis. We want to support the Open Skies Agreement through a German observation platform.

We will work internationally for the full implementation of the UN small arms treaty, and we will support its conversion into adequate national control mechanisms. All small arms and light weapons which are traded or in circulation in the non-governmental sector in Germany, or are intended for export and covered by the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, are in future to be marked as indelibly as possible in order to ensure their traceability. We also want to pursue vigorously the worldwide implementation of the international Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Germany will support regional agreements on zones free of weapons of mass destruction. Through a common EU position, we intend to contribute to the success of the upcoming 2015 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The use of chemical weapons in Syria has shown clearly that further efforts are required to promote the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) with new initiatives. Exports of dual-use chemical substances and plants to non-CWC States must be made subject to particularly strict controls.

The United Nations, global dialogue and strategic partnerships

The United Nations plays a key role in preserving peace and meeting global challenges. Through new initiatives in coordination with our European partners, we want to contribute our share to the renewal and further development of United Nations structures, including the reform and expansion of the Security Council. Germany remains prepared to shoulder greater responsibility at the United Nations level, including the assumption of a permanent seat on the Security Council. We shall strive for a permanent seat for the European Union in the future.

To fulfil its tasks of preserving peace, the United Nations requires adequate resources for its peacekeeping missions and the political missions of the world organisation, so that an effective multilateral peace policy can be pursued.

We aim to arrive at an effective staffing concept to fill the leading positions in the United Nations. To this end, we will also enhance the status of interdepartmental coordination of UN policy. We will strengthen the role of Bonn as a UN location. The further development of international law must help the United Nations to contribute more effectively to the global enforcement of freedom and human rights. The concept of the Responsibility to Protect needs to be further elaborated and implemented under international law. Above all, the “preventive pillar” of the Responsibility to Protect must be strengthened internationally.

The Coalition recognises the key role of women both in the prevention and in the resolution of conflicts. It will gradually implement the National Action Plan on UN SC Resolution 1325, in close coordination with civil society.

We also want to continue resolutely cultivating our engagement on behalf of peace and security outside of Europe through strategic partnerships.

In 2015, Germany will once again assume the G8 Presidency. In addition to this, we will continue our dedicated cooperation with our G20 partners. We will continue the “International German Forum”.

The Middle East and the Arab World

We acknowledge Germany’s special responsibility towards Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and towards Israel’s security. Israel’s right to exist and its security are not negotiable for us. In 2015 we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. The German Government will mark this anniversary in an appropriate manner.

Germany and Europe have a strong interest in peace and stability in the Middle East. Our goal is a two-state solution in which the State of Israel lives within recognised and permanently secure borders side by side in peace and security with an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state.

We support the transformation processes of those Arab states in which positive development towards democracy and a pluralistic society is evident. We want to continue the transformation partnerships that we have begun. The decisive criteria for our support of these states are their treatment of the opposition, their respect for fundamental rights and freedoms including the right to freedom of religion, and the existence of press and media freedom. Religious minorities must be able to exercise their faith freely, and must be protected from violence. The verdict against employees of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the sentences of several years' imprisonment must not be allowed to stand. The German-Egyptian declaration of January 2013 must continue to apply. German political foundations must be allowed to work freely in Egypt.

We note with great concern that the situation of Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities in North Africa and the Middle East has deteriorated since the fall of the authoritarian regimes. Therefore, we will do our utmost to support the development of pluralistic societies in which freedom of religion is guaranteed and implemented. Christians must have a future in this region.

Germany will, together with its partners, actively help seek a political solution to the conflict in Syria. Along with the international community, we will maintain pressure on the regime in Damascus to adhere fully to the commitments it has made. We are concerned about the growing influence of Islamist forces. We want to help alleviate the suffering of Syrian refugees and displaced persons in neighbouring countries, and we are working for aid organisations to obtain humanitarian access within Syria. Together with the UNHCR, we will approach other EU member states to advocate a joint European initiative to take in Syrian refugees.

We call upon Iran to clear up all doubts about the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. A nuclear-armed Iran would pose a danger to the entire region as well as beyond it and would gravely damage worldwide efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation. In order to avert the danger of Iran gaining the capability to produce nuclear weapons, we support all efforts for a diplomatic solution to the Iran conflict within the framework of the negotiating group of the UK, France, Germany, the United States, Russia and China (E3+3). At the same time, we adhere to the "dual-track approach". The international community's policy towards Iran, which is based on offers of cooperation and targeted sanctions, has brought about some movement in the previously stalled negotiations. Our aim is to regain Iran as a trustworthy partner on the international stage.

Asia

We want to further strengthen relations with Asian states on the basis of universal values. We want to take the stronger focus of American foreign policy on the Asia-Pacific region as an opportunity to help a politics of cooperation and balance of interests gain precedence over a politics of confrontation in this region. Friendship with Japan is an important cornerstone of German foreign policy. We welcome the current negotiations on concluding a free trade agreement between the European Union and Japan.

China is a strategic partner to Germany and the EU thanks to our many shared interests. We will also further intensify our multifaceted political and economic cooperation within the framework of our regular intergovernmental consultations. We are working to ensure that constitutionally guaranteed rights such as the protection of all citizens' universal human rights are respected in China. Protection of intellectual property and our cyber security should be strengthened. China is called upon to contribute to international conflict resolution within the United Nations in a manner commensurate with its economic and political stature.

India is our strategic partner. We want to expand our political, economic and civil society cooperation. The regular consultations between our governments serve this purpose. We support the EU's negotiations with India on a free trade agreement.

Afghanistan

After more than ten years, our security engagement in Afghanistan will change. We are working for a secure future for Afghanistan with an interministerial engagement. The ISAF combat mission in Afghanistan is to be concluded by the end of 2014, and the military capacity to act must be maintained until this time to secure the withdrawal. The people in Afghanistan and the international community can rely on us to stand by our commitments – particularly with regard to civilian aid, which will become the focus of our engagement in Afghanistan. At the same time, we want to achieve the best possible protection for our civilian forces. Local Afghan staff who have worked for us in Afghanistan and whose safety and lives will be threatened after the end of the operation should be admitted to Germany together with their families.

The Coalition favours appropriate German participation within the framework of a NATO-led advisory mission in the event that requirements under international law are met and the participation of our partners is ensured.

Africa and Latin America

We want to take greater account of the growing importance of Africa and its increasing ownership, and we want to expand opportunities for cooperation. Germany has a particular interest in empowering African states to resolve regional problems themselves. That is why we will support efforts to strengthen sub- and inter-regional cooperation. We are focusing on cooperation

and interaction between equal partners, by strengthening the institutions of our African partners, promoting the private sector and increasingly putting good governance at the centre of our policy. We will continue to support efforts to establish a security structure within the African Union and will participate in peace initiatives within the framework of the United Nations and the European Union.

The strong partnership between Germany, the EU and Latin America is based on mature political, cultural and economic relations, which are shaped by common values and interests. We want to entrench this common ground and strengthen these ties. We want to expand our strategic partnership with Brazil.

We want to work together with all the states of Latin America to make progress on meeting pressing global challenges. We want to use the economic opportunities to mutual advantage and, for this purpose, further develop economic relations and encourage investment and trade.

We will make our contribution to strengthening cross-border scientific, research, educational and cultural networks. At the same time we want to focus particularly on countries which share our values.

Cultural relations and education policy

Cultural relations and education policy remains the third pillar of German foreign policy. The available resources should be used to promote dialogue between cultures and for crisis prevention in the wider sense and also to pass on the values of freedom, democracy and human rights. Cultural exchange and German cultural institutions such as the German Archaeological Institute, the Goethe-Institut, the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), the Humboldt Foundation and German schools abroad and scientific cooperation have an important bridge-building function. The Goethe-Institut is particularly well equipped for the programme and language work and remains – like German schools abroad – an integral part of the German Government's activities abroad.

With our cultural relations and education policy, we want to pass on a positive and true-to-life picture of our country to other countries, to arouse interest in the German language and culture and to advertise Germany as a location for finance, science and innovation. Imparting and promoting the German language abroad is a major task of cultural relations and education policy. We will expand international educational cooperation in the schools and university sector, strengthen the successful fellowship programmes and take into account the increased interest abroad in the dual-training system, including through vocational training available at the German schools abroad, which continue to work in the general interest.

In our cultural relations and education policy we attach particular importance to the dialogue with the Islamic world. It is in our interest to support the moderate forces in their struggle for democracy and the rule of law. Resolute opposition to any form of anti-Semitism is also a mark of our foreign policy.

Europe is also a cultural project. Germany with its intermediary organisations bears a special responsibility for a shared European cultural space.

The Coalition declares its support for the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity and the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property. It will also take the initiative to accede to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

Political foundations

The political foundations make an indispensable contribution to the international dialogue and so also reinforce the reputation of the Federal Republic of Germany. We want to support and legally safeguard the international work of the political foundations in the future. At the same time, we want to strengthen new regional focal points by providing appropriate resources.

Foreign and security policy as an interministerial responsibility

The Coalition is committed to strengthening interministerial cooperation on effective foreign and security policy, the success of which requires complementary use of civilian and military instruments. We think and act in an intermeshed way in the realm of foreign and security policy. Development cooperation is an integral part of the concepts of early crisis detection, crisis prevention, combating the causes of conflict and managing conflicts. Civilian crisis prevention is especially significant, and we will strengthen and further develop its structures.

In the next four years we will enhance support for peace and conflict research. Existing German institutions for peace-building and peace research such as the Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF), the Civil Peace Service, the Federal College for Security Studies and the German Foundation for Peace Research have proven themselves and should play a greater role in providing policy advice.

We will take specific measures to encourage German officials, judges and public prosecutors to take part in assignments abroad. We want to improve the legal, organisational and financial conditions for the deployment of police officers in peace missions. To this end, the German Government will negotiate a comprehensive joint agreement between the Federal Government and Länder in the next legislative period, in keeping with their joint responsibility.

Our thanks and recognition go to our soldiers, police officers, diplomats and development and aid workers. They deserve our particular care.

Bringing the Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) in line with new requirements

We are committed to strong defence through modern and effective armed forces. The Bundeswehr has proven itself as an army of and for democracy. The central concept of “Innere Führung” (leadership development and civic education) and of the soldier as a citizen in uniform continues to be a feature of service in the Bundeswehr and deployment of the Bundeswehr on behalf of peace and freedom worldwide. The Bundeswehr is an army in action. The reorientation of the Bundeswehr is intended to fit it to the altered security policy challenges of the 21st century. We will resolutely continue this strategy and bring it to a successful conclusion.

Implementation entails considerable adjustment processes for the entire Bundeswehr. Members of the Bundeswehr and their families need predictability and planning certainty. Current medium-term financial planning provides the basis for this. Especially in the interest of planning certainty for soldiers and staff, we will fundamentally adhere to the decisions that have been made. We will make readjustments as necessary in accordance with the evaluation of the reorientation which is currently underway and will be completed by the end of 2014 at the latest.

We will pay close attention to efficiency, functionality, attractiveness and presence on the ground when implementing the next steps. The established number of up to 185 000 soldiers corresponds to the requirements of an efficient Bundeswehr ready for operations and deployment and Germany’s role in comparison with our European partners. We want to evaluate the area of civilian employees in relation to their tasks. Further reducing the size of the Bundeswehr is not a promising option.

Attractiveness

It is important that service in the Bundeswehr remains attractive. We will press ahead with a campaign to demonstrate its attractions. We support a more family-friendly policy, particularly the expansion of child care, if necessary coordinated with the municipalities. Our aim is to have deployment as close to home as possible, in view of the high numbers of commuters. In addition, we will establish on a permanent basis the possibility of choosing between payment of separation allowance and the award of a relocation allowance. As a result of the reorientation, units where military and civilian staff work together are the rule. The *Soldatenbeteiligungsgesetz* [Law on the Participation of Soldiers] will be adjusted appropriately. We will endeavour to introduce regulations to make the particular features of a soldier’s profession and a guarantee of operational readiness compatible with family and occupation. For soldiers who have left active service, we want to arrange retrospective social security contributions in such a way as to ensure they are not disadvantaged. The Coalition will lift the current restrictions on additional earnings for former soldiers when subsequently employed in the private sector.

At the centre of society

We are committed to widening understanding of the special features of being a soldier and so ensuring wide recognition of service in the armed forces. Ceremonial vows are an expression of how the Bundeswehr is rooted in

democratic society. The Coalition supports the continued dialogue of the Bundeswehr in and with society. We want to share responsibility for our veterans. This applies to care for wounded and disabled soldiers and to the dignified remembrance of our fallen and dead. The youth officers perform important work in providing information on the task of the Bundeswehr. We are happy for as many educational institutions as possible to make use of this offer. Access by the Bundeswehr to schools, universities, training fairs and similar forums is completely natural for us.

The new voluntary military service has proven itself. The mandatory periods of voluntary military service that are currently possible are being examined and adjusted as necessary. The Coalition recognises the value of the reserve for carrying out the tasks of the Bundeswehr and as a link and intermediary between the Bundeswehr and society. The regional security and support forces are appropriately equipped for their tasks in the field of civilian-military cooperation. To increase the attractiveness of service in the reserve, we are examining the question of adjusting and simplifying pay such as the provision of cover under pension law. We will systematically work to make service in the reserve compatible with progress in one's civilian profession. The public service has an example to set here.

Being prepared for future missions

The Bundeswehr will continue to be needed in missions abroad, which requires that it be equipped with a broad spectrum of military capacities. To the extent that is possible and sensible, we are dedicated to both pooling and sharing of military capacities within the framework of the EU and increasing the division of tasks. This also applies to the relevant NATO activities (smart defence). This could be approached through partnerships or the framework nations concept, with states forming groups for mutual support. Together with our Alliance partners, we want to strengthen skills that are too poorly trained and increase sustainability. We seek an ever-closer alliance of European armed forces, which can be developed further into a European army under parliamentary control.

The Bundeswehr shall remain a parliamentary army. Parliamentary participation in decision-making about Bundeswehr missions has proven itself. It is a basis for widely anchoring the Bundeswehr and its operations in society. Parliamentary reservation is Germany's strength, not a weakness. In the light of increased cooperation and division of labour with our partners, we want to ensure parliamentary participation in decisions about the deployment of German soldiers. Increasing participation of German soldiers in integrated NATO- and EU-level structures and staffs must be reconcilable with the parliamentary reservation. For this reason, we would like to establish a commission which will, within a year, review how parliamentary rights can be safeguarded along the path of continuing alliance integration and despite the diversification of tasks. The commission will then formulate options for action.

Operations by the Special Forces Command (KSK) always involve a high degree of danger for our special forces and are subject to secrecy. We will ensure that Parliament is informed of KSK operations in the tried and tested form.

Equipment, procurement and use

Our soldiers require the best equipment possible. Their safety is central in this. The Bundeswehr procures what it needs and not what it is offered. The State can expect that military equipment that is ordered is supplied according to contract, on time and at the agreed price and quality. Contractual relations with industry must be clear and unambiguous. Recent experiences with major equipment show that project supervision and control must be improved at all levels. The restructuring of the procurement process, which started with the reorientation, must be rigorously implemented. The provision of information for the defence and the budget committees of the German Bundestag regarding the current state of play in the development and procurement of equipment and material is being improved.

Germany has a fundamental interest in an innovative, effective and competitive national security and defence industry. We are committed to maintaining selected key technologies and industrial capabilities, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises. We support a strengthened European and Euro-Atlantic arms cooperation which implements specific joint equipment and procurement projects according to the same standards for all nations. The European Defence Agency plays a key role in this.

Uniform standards for certification and approval of military equipment are a prerequisite for improving military cooperation in the EU and NATO. This applies especially to military aviation. Germany will set a good example here: an integrated military aviation authority is being set up with effect from spring 2014.

Unmanned aircraft already play an important role in Bundeswehr operations in Afghanistan in reconnaissance and for the protection of our soldiers. The Bundeswehr will have to rely on such capabilities in the future as well. The Coalition will bring forward European development for unmanned aircraft. Europe urgently needs a common set of rules for their approval and participation in European air transport. The Coalition will continue the relevant initiatives.

We categorically oppose illegal killings by armed drone in violation of international law. Germany will advocate the inclusion of armed unmanned aircraft in international disarmament and arms control regimes, and will work to ensure that fully automated weapons systems, which take decisions on the use of weapons out of people's hands, are banned under international law. Before deciding about the acquisition of qualitatively new weapons systems, we will carefully review all related questions of international law, constitutional law, security policy and ethics. This especially applies to new generations of unmanned aircraft, which have further combat capacities beyond reconnaissance.

Protecting the State's monopoly on the use of force

We consider it out of the question to outsource military tasks to private firms, as is increasingly seen in international missions abroad. The Bundestag issues mandates to the Bundeswehr for operations abroad, including the use of military assets, as required. Military tasks may not be transferred to private firms. The German Government will work within the OSCE for private military security firms to be included in national reporting in accordance with the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security.

Protecting and furthering human rights

Human rights are indivisibly and universally valid. We are committed to protecting and furthering them, both in Germany and also in foreign relations. Human rights violations not only harm the dignity of the people concerned, they may also present a risk to peace and international security. Our goal is an unwavering and coherent human rights policy. The Basic Law, the European and international human rights conventions and international humanitarian law form the foundation of our policy. We support the new strategy of EU human rights policy.

We express our unwavering commitment to the worldwide abolition of the death penalty and to the prohibition of torture. Together with the Länder, we support the work of the National Agency for the Prevention of Torture.

The human rights of women and children are particularly endangered. We combat all forms of human trafficking, slavery, organ trafficking, forced prostitution, forced marriage, genital mutilation, attacks in the name of "honour" and other inhumane practices. We want to improve children's chances for a dignified life. Children need food, education and medical care. We support all efforts to prevent them from being abused as slave workers, sex slaves or soldiers.

We champion freedom of religion as a fundamental human right. This includes the right not to belong to any religious community and the right to change one's religion. Solidarity with disadvantaged and oppressed religious minorities is especially important to us. In many countries of the world in particular Christians are attacked, persecuted and expelled because of their faith. Religious conflicts often combine with social and economic tensions.

We work internationally for freedom of the press and opinion as an essential foundation of a free and democratic society. We support and protect courageous defenders of human rights and promote civil society forces which need our assistance.

We condemn homophobic tendencies and promote tolerant lively civil societies.

At the United Nations, we are committed to the outlawing of expulsion and the widening of World Refugee Day to include remembrance of the victims of expulsion. The majority of the refugees in the world are displaced persons within the borders of their own country. Therefore, we support the dissemination and implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, so that these people also receive protection and humanitarian aid.

We are committed to raising the status of human rights protection and strengthening its instruments at the United Nations. We want the UN Human Rights Council to take credible worldwide action against human rights violations. We stand by the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and we support its function as an independent organ of global criminal justice. We resolutely oppose efforts to weaken the European Court of Human Rights. The German Government will actively participate in the further development of international humanitarian law.

We will push for transnational enterprises to comply with social, environmental and human rights standards. The ILO Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the OECD Guidelines and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights set the parameters for this work. We will implement the UN Guiding Principles at national level.

The German Institute for Human Rights is to be given a stable foundation based on the "Paris Principles".

Humanitarian aid

We will attach greater significance to humanitarian aid in line with its increased importance. We will strengthen international humanitarian principles, for example by implementing the "European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid". We will work at EU level to ensure that the organisations responsible for humanitarian aid remain independent. We want to focus our humanitarian aid according to need and to take care of the people in crisis areas, who are not the focus of public attention.

We will put particular emphasis on early-warning systems, disaster prevention and disaster risk reduction in order to prevent natural disasters and will be active in developing international instruments for the increasingly important issue of climate refugees.

Economic cooperation and sustainable development

Our development policy aims to overcome hunger and poverty worldwide and strengthen democracy and the rule of law on the basis of our values and interests. We are committed to peace, freedom and security, respect for and implementation of political and social human rights and preservation of our planet. We promote the development of a socially and environmentally responsible market economy, good governance and civil society participation. Our development policy gives help towards self-help. We also understand development policy as global structural policy, and we intend to shape globalisation sustainably and justly for all people.

Development policy is preventive in nature and is thus also forward-looking peace policy. We are oriented to the Millennium Development Goals and their further development within the post-2015 development agenda.

Shaping framework conditions

We are dedicated to ensuring fair global trade conditions and the protection of global public goods. That is why we especially seek a development-oriented conclusion to the WTO global trade talks and a fair balancing of interests with developing countries. This must also apply to global agricultural trade. We want to improve working conditions in developing countries. We are working for binding, internationally recognised, human rights, environmental and social minimum standards such as the ILO Core Labour Standards. We therefore advocate the inclusion of these standards in all EU trade agreements.

For the post-2015 period we are seeking Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which are based on broad, inclusive, resource-conserving and low-carbon growth. We want to play an active role in the further development of the Millennium Development Goals into universal development and sustainability goals.

Development policy should have a prominent place on the agendas of the G8 and G20 summits. We will work to ensure that development-related summit pledges are implemented more quickly in the future.

We want to improve the German development cooperation institutions further in terms of efficiency. Cooperation between the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Reconstruction Loan Corporation (KfW) should be strengthened. We want to improve development-oriented, interministerial cooperation. Our contributions to multilateral development organisations are geared to their effectiveness and capability, which we want to enhance. To this end, we will use the bilateral and multilateral instruments flexibly according to their comparative benefits. Where the framework conditions such as effective and transparent control over use of funds are guaranteed, budgetary aid can be an instrument for increasing autonomous responsibility.

Sustainable funding

We adhere to the goal of providing 0.7% of the gross national income for official development assistance. We will move towards this goal through annual increases in the funds for development assistance in the federal budget. We want Germany to continue on the funding path towards the 0.7% ODA target.

Germany will be a reliable partner in the world with regard to pledges made in an international sphere. With international partners and scientific support, we will develop proposals for further development of the ODA concept. We want to ensure appropriate use of ODA funds. We adhere to the obligations entered into in

Copenhagen. Expenditure associated with those should be allocated fairly among the ministries.

Thematic focal points

As part of the fundamental orientation of our development cooperation, we are promoting rural development in particular. We oppose irresponsible speculation with food and intend to implement the Voluntary Guidelines of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on the Responsible Governance of Tenure. The International Undertaking on World Food Security and the Right to Food are of central importance for us. Therefore, the German Government will be a reliable partner and will collaborate in technical matters in international organisations such as the FAO.

Health forms the basis for sustainable development. The Global Fund plays an important role in this, which should be reflected in the policy of the German Government. To provide better protection against life's risks, we want to help in developing basic social security systems. This also includes the development of functioning and fair tax systems.

We want to mainstream equality of women and men and the implementation of the rights of girls and women in German development cooperation.

Education is the key to sustainable development. We want to establish equally good educational and training opportunities for women and men and for girls and boys. The inclusion of people with disabilities should be more firmly rooted in development cooperation and be organised more systematically.

We will focus on protection of natural life support systems and on climate protection measures including efficient and renewable energy supply, protection of forests and biological diversity. Developing countries must be supported in adjusting to climate change and its consequences.

We support measures for civil crisis prevention, non-violent conflict management and post-conflict management.

Regional focal points and cooperation partners

In order to meet Millennium Development Goals which have not yet been achieved and to overcome hunger and poverty, we will strengthen our future efforts in the poorest countries. We intend to focus particularly on fragile states.

Intergovernmental cooperation with countries in which government action systematically conflicts with our values should take place only if our support measures can contribute to change, if it is necessary for humanitarian reasons or if it serves the cause of peace and security.

Bilateral state cooperation with emerging economies must take into consideration their higher capacities and greater international responsibility. Emerging economies must be expected to assume responsibility for protecting their own populations' human rights to food, health and education. We are focusing on the protection of global public goods, the search for resource-conserving sustainable paths of development and, in some cases, triangular cooperation projects to benefit poorer developing countries. The promotion of civil society and of civil society cooperation in these countries is especially important.

Our development cooperation supports the transformation processes in the southern and eastern Mediterranean regions and also in the Member States of the Eastern Partnership. These regions are a particular focal point of our development policy alongside Sub-Saharan Africa.

The German Government will promote civil society engagement and strengthen awareness of the responsibility of churches, non-governmental organisations, political and private foundations and industry and also of municipalities with regard to development policy. This applies here in Germany as much as in our partner countries. Intensive cooperation such as partnerships between chambers and associations as well as vocational training partnerships should be strengthened further. We want to intensify educational work in development policy and support fair trade. As part of our cooperation with German industry (PPP), we support the development and expansion of the private sector in developing countries on the basis of a balanced sharing of responsibilities between state and the private sector, in so far as this serves sustainable social and environmental development.