

Containment, Recovery and Renewal

Text of the resolution:

1 The Coronavirus has placed humanity in a state of emergency. The world already
2 mourns over 200,000 dead and great suffering. To stop the pandemic, the
3 economic and social life of the entire world has virtually ground to a halt, with
4 dramatic consequences: People are losing their jobs, social stress and domestic
5 violence are increasing. The world is on the brink of a deep recession.

6 We are still in the middle of the pandemic. It is essential - with all our might - to
7 keep the number of victims as low as possible and at the same time to prevent a
8 social and economic collapse. To achieve this, we must continue to exercise great
9 caution and learn to live with the virus for a longer period of time, while at the
10 same time continuously combatting it better and more precisely.

11 Corona is a global challenge to which there must be a global response. No state
12 can meet it alone. This is especially true for us in Europe. We must think of ways
13 out of the crisis in a consistently European way. Only Europe can get us through
14 this difficult time, only together will we be able to fight the pandemic and get our
15 economy back on its feet. Europe's cohesion has already suffered great damage.
16 We must now do everything we can to ensure that the peace project Europe finds
17 its way back to the historic course of integration.

18 No one knows how long this global state of emergency will last; no one can truly
19 foresee the actual scope and impact. Nevertheless, the crisis has already
20 demonstrated how important it is to take forward-looking political action. Working
21 on our future viability and crisis resilience will ultimately make all the difference.

22 Adversity shows us what is important: A sense of community, solidarity and
23 humanity. The recognition that German and European interests are one; the
24 cognisance of strong international institutions. The robustness of the economy,
25 health and social systems and the preservation of our natural resources. The need
26 for stable general services. For the strength of those that are often not seen in
27 society: Truck drivers, harvesters, cashiers, cleaners and caregivers. For the
28 employees in the health authorities, hospitals and research institutes, in medical
29 product manufacturers, in doctors' practices, in the German armed forces, police
30 and fire brigades, the rescue services or the numerous crisis teams. For the many
31 women who keep everything going, not only in low-paid care professions, but also
32 in many families. We owe them all not only our gratitude, but a promise for the
33 future: Recognition, equal rights, better wages. A new security policy - preventive,
34 resilient, comprehensive and European. We need a new, sustainable promise of
35 security.

36 It is not self-evident that this insight will endure beyond the current crisis. We
37 stand at a crossroads. Are we writing off an old policy, the old fragility, the old
38 problems and creating new ones? Or are we courageously pushing ahead with the
39 necessary changes and rebuilding the economy and society on solid ground? We
40 are convinced that only a political awakening will lead us out of the crisis for the
41 long term. Only if we change things fundamentally, only if we turn our
42 commitment into reality, will we be able to master these and the other major
43 challenges - above all the climate crisis. Being resistant to global crises is the key
44 to a new security in the 21st century.

45 Corona and the fight against the virus will shape all our lives, social debates and
46 politics for a long time to come. After the pandemic, our world will be a different
47 one. But with every step forward, however small, a window into the future is
48 opening.

49 Democracy proves its worth especially in times of crisis. It is a learning system in
50 which responsible citizens freely discuss their future. That is the prerequisite for
51 innovation. We can and must learn lessons for the future from current experience.
52 With Corona, the political debates do not end, they begin anew.

53 **II. Action during the pandemic**

54 Germany has fought the pandemic resolutely and has so far protected the health
55 system from collapsing. But nothing has been won yet. As long as a vaccine is not
56 available, the Coronavirus will remain a permanent threat and we will probably
57 have to live with far-reaching restrictions for a long time to come. We need to have
58 an informed discussion about where and how to relax the current restrictions
59 gradually and on the assumption that our health system will not be overburdened.
60 The general immunity card planned by the federal government is
61 counterproductive because it can be an incentive to become deliberately infected.
62 In addition, its potential for social division is enormous; discrimination in private
63 life, at work and in the public sphere could be its consequence. We reject it.

64 In this exceptional period, proportionality is the order of the day. It is the
65 responsibility of the state to repeatedly review whether the massive restrictions on
66 fundamental rights are proportionate and whether there are milder means of
67 accomplishing this. Restrictions, as well as gradual easing, must be explained as
68 transparently as possible with clear, comprehensible criteria in order to create
69 understanding, acceptance and trust. The restrictions must be appropriate,
70 necessary and proportionate, take into account the consequences, consider possible
71 alternatives and weigh them thoroughly. They must be limited in time and justified
72 again and again. While there was great unity in the lockdown, society is
73 threatening to split apart during the phases of relaxation. Instead of wearing
74 oneself out in slogans of perseverance and reopening, we need a different, more
75 targeted strategy for combating the virus, one based on tests, rapid traceability of
76 infections and protective measures. We must now work to create the conditions for
77 this, especially in the sensitive areas. Relaxation must be based on the common
78 good and must not depend on which lobby group has the most influence.

79 With the lockdown, the federal government and the states decided on the most
80 massive encroachment on fundamental rights in the history of the Federal Republic

81 of Germany as well as unprecedented aid packages. BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN
82 supported these measures in the Bundestag and at the level of the state
83 governments, submitted proposals and thus contributed to rapid, united action.
84 This was also a way to create broad confidence in the necessity of a lockdown. We
85 are prepared to continue shouldering the burden. To that end, we are putting
86 forward our own proposals where there is a need for action and applying the
87 brakes where necessary. The federal and state governments must involve political
88 groups and parliaments in the process. They are the place for democratic debate,
89 even in times of crisis. It is our responsibility not only to accompany these
90 processes critically now, but also to deal with them comprehensively, fairly and in
91 a spirit of solidarity after the crisis has been overcome, to identify mistakes and to
92 develop better concepts for the future.

93 Despite all the social cohesion, the political failures of the federal government are
94 now becoming increasingly visible. With the same vehemence with which we went
95 into the lockdown, a functioning, European-coordinated pandemic economy must
96 be built up that is geared to global needs. Many companies in the country are
97 prepared to help and to convert their production to basic protective goods. But if
98 the German government does not coordinate this, it will not work. We need
99 reliable figures on the necessary demand, purchase guarantees, investment
100 assistance where necessary and coordination in the event of bottlenecks in the
101 supply chains.

102 Test capacities and the supply of facial masks must be drastically increased. The
103 provision of protective clothing is particularly necessary for social assistance
104 institutions, for child and youth welfare services, women's counselling centres, first
105 aid centres and collective accommodation for people seeking protection or for help
106 for the homeless, now, not later. Like nursing homes, they must be equipped with
107 protective masks. We need a data protection-compliant, pan-European, voluntary
108 corona tracing app as an important element in the fight against the epidemic. The
109 processes in the health authorities must be improved, accelerated and made more
110 digital, and sufficient personnel are needed to follow infection chains and
111 quarantine monitoring. A corona tracing app is another important component - also
112 Europe-wide - for containing the virus. It must be available as quickly as possible,
113 be based on unrestricted voluntary action, be open-source and interoperable, and
114 meet the highest standards of data protection and IT security. The data may only be
115 processed on the end devices. These principles must be safeguarded by law.

116 The crisis is fuelling social problems and shows who has no lobby: Families,
117 especially single parents, and children. The closure of schools and kindergartens,
118 for example, dramatically increases the inequality of opportunities for children.
119 Between 'completely closed' and 'everyone back in immediately', there must be
120 room for proportionality and pragmatic solutions - small group lessons by the day,
121 student-teacher discussions. If shift systems are introduced in the company, this
122 will also work in the daycare centre. The state has a duty of care for children and
123 an educational mandate. When society comes under pressure, marginalised and
124 vulnerable groups, such as refugees, people with disabilities and homeless people,
125 feel the consequences of the Corona crisis. How a society deals with these groups
126 and minorities is a seismograph for the strength of our democracy - not only, but
127 especially in times of crisis.

128 Once again it has become dramatically clear how much our social life and thus our
129 economic prosperity still depends on women looking after children, cooking and
130 shopping or cleaning the home. But childcare may not become a private matter;
131 families must be able to rely on the state. What is also needed is a large,
132 comprehensive social protection umbrella that also protects those who are poor,
133 homeless, exposed to stress, incitement in the Internet, domestic violence,
134 depression or suicide.

135 The longer the pandemic lasts, the more the following question comes to the fore:
136 How do we learn to live with the threat of the virus without subjecting public life
137 to drastic long-term restrictions? Every day we have to deal anew - also with a
138 view to a possible new wave of Corona - with how we organise education, care,
139 business and trade, cultural and leisure activities and, last but not least, equal
140 opportunities for participation in social and political life under pandemic
141 conditions, while at the same time protecting people from infection as best we can.

142 **II. Combat the climate crisis and Corona jointly**

143 The world is facing a deep recession. The International Monetary Fund predicts
144 that Corona will lead to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of
145 the 1930s. This is a profound economic, social and societal challenge that we in
146 Europe must face together and with all our strength. In the national measures to
147 combat the economic consequences of the Corona crisis, it is essential to prevent
148 further social and economic disparities between the Member States. The economic
149 stimulus packages must therefore be conceived as European or coordinated by
150 Europe, for example linked via the Green Deal, so that all countries in the
151 European internal market can develop together. Nobody will manage it alone.

152 There is no blueprint for this historic moment. The economic effects impact almost
153 every aspect of life and almost all industries, but they affect them very differently.
154 Some companies can almost continue as before the crisis began thanks to home
155 offices, but they have fewer orders. Some may remain in lockdown for months and
156 see few prospects for the future. Others can slowly reopen with significant
157 restrictions, but their supply chains do not work. In addition, we must not allow
158 economic policy measures to counteract health policy measures.

159 Unlike following the financial crisis, this time we in Germany will not be able to
160 simply export ourselves out of the recession. Demand has collapsed globally. And
161 we have to find an answer to the fact that old social imbalances are being
162 exacerbated by Corona and new ones are arising.

163 In all this, the second major task of our time is to overcome the climate crisis.
164 After two hot summers, we are already experiencing the next drought. Bone dry
165 fields, forest fires in April - that is also the reality in our country. And there will be
166 no vaccine against the climate crisis. Not this year or any other year. We will fail
167 as a global community if the measures now planned accelerate the destruction of
168 our livelihoods.

169 It is therefore crucial to set the right course now. There is no question that the
170 recession must be fought with full force; jobs and competitiveness must be
171 maintained. But if we do this with old policies and old means, we will create new

172 insecurities and be heading for huge social and economic damage. Our framework
173 for action must be the Paris Climate Treaty and the global objectives for
174 sustainable development.

175 Before the pandemic, a broad alliance of companies, the climate movement, trade
176 unions, researchers and scientists had recognised the opportunities that lie in a new
177 direction that brings together climate protection, economic dynamism and social
178 balance. The guiding principle of our actions is clear: We need a consistent
179 transformation in line with the principles of the circular economy towards
180 sustainable materials, resource and energy efficiency.

181 Environmental services promote innovation and ensure future viability and
182 opportunities in all markets. We have a double task and a double opportunity: To
183 tackle the economic crisis caused by Corona and the climate crisis together. the
184 European Green Deal must serve as the core principle of the exit plan from
185 the crisis. We firmly oppose initial attempts to soften or postpone this under the
186 guise of the Corona pandemic. The Green Deal must become a pact for the
187 ecological and social transformation of the economy.

188 It will require massive efforts and unprecedented programmes to meet these
189 challenges. Now is the time for great and creative responses and decisive action.
190 On the one hand, we must stimulate and stabilise in the short term and, at the same
191 time, set a course towards climate neutrality and sustainability. It is absolutely
192 clear that such an economic stimulus package can only be implemented once in
193 many years. This makes it all the more necessary to take a decisive and forward-
194 looking approach to reconstruction.

195 **III. Measure against the economic crisis – social and ecological**

196 Direct aid is needed for the sectors that have come to a stand still during the
197 lockdown and economic stimuli for those that are slowly starting up again.

198 It is clear that tax-financed economic aid in a recession must be linked to targets:
199 When stock corporations pay dividends or managers' bonuses, they cannot expect
200 any help from the state. Companies that were supported with state funds during the
201 crisis and want to pay out dividends again in the future, must return this aid to the
202 state. Companies that apply for state aid should first have to disclose in which
203 country they make which profit and how much tax they pay. Under no
204 circumstances should public money be allowed to contribute to extending existing
205 tax loopholes. State shareholdings in companies must be tied to the condition of
206 environmental and social criteria for the respective industries. If the state uses
207 taxpayers' money to invest in companies, it must also have a say and be able to
208 influence corporate strategy, just as private investors do.

209 For this year, a German emergency economic stimulus programme of about 100
210 billion euros should be prepared, which can take effect quickly if the medical
211 situation allows a stronger restart of economic life. Let us then quickly stimulate
212 the economy, let us prevent millions of people in our country from falling into
213 existential need as a result of the consequences of Corona, let us prevent waves of
214 bankruptcies from leaving our inner cities desolate, and let us prevent that what we
215 hold dear, culture, travel and avoid permanent damage being inflicted on that

216 which we cherish. We need support, especially for the weakest. The measures must
217 be limited to the duration of the crisis management and must be continuously
218 reviewed.

219 We propose the following key points for this emergency programme:

220 ***Strengthen local retail – stop the wave of bankruptcies***

221 • The local retail trade and especially the owner-managed gastronomy and
222 cultural institutions are suffering massively from the crisis. The structural
223 change of the retail trade towards online has accelerated, brick-and-mortar
224 businesses are threatened by a wave of insolvencies. In order to prevent the
225 inner cities from becoming deserted, we are proposing a fund of EUR 20
226 billion for the second half of the year. With direct subsidies and purchase
227 incentives in the form of on-the-spot purchase vouchers, we want to ensure
228 the preservation of structures in retail, gastronomy and cultural life. In
229 addition, we want to support specialised brick-and-mortar retailers and
230 owner-managed stores in particular in digitisation and the structural,
231 regional anchoring of digital business models. The introduction of
232 additional free public transportation for shopping can also help to stimulate
233 consumption. Gastronomy can also be supported by expanding outdoor bar
234 areas that allow for the observance of distance regulations. To this end,
235 public areas and parking spaces should be made available to the catering
236 trade for a limited period wherever possible.

237 • There is also a need for a targeted fund for the still closed creative and
238 event sector in order to ensure its continued existence; this is more
239 effective and fairer than the exchange system planned by the federal
240 government.

241 ***Improve social security – retain purchasing power***

242 • In order to cover the increasing costs during the pandemic, a monthly
243 supplement of 100 euros per month for adults is to be granted on the basic
244 provisions (SGB II, SGB XII, AsylBIG). Instead of lunches by delivery
245 service, as the federal government plans to do, we demand a monthly
246 supplement of 60€ for eligible children and young people in accordance
247 with the education and participation package, which will be paid
248 automatically. The currently easier access to basic security must apply to
249 all people in order to prevent a two-tier system. To this end, it must be
250 granted as an individual benefit, without crediting partner income.

251 • We also want to temporarily open BAföG to students who would otherwise
252 not be eligible for support, as they are currently often deprived of
253 opportunities for additional income.

254 • As long as day-care centres and schools have not fully reopened, parents
255 who are therefore looking after their children should have the opportunity
256 to take parental leave and receive a Corona parental allowance in return.
257 The parental allowance should be designed in such a way that it provides
258 incentives for equal childcare.

259 • The short-time work allowance is to be increased to 90 percent for incomes
260 up to 1,300 euros and decrease to 60 percent for incomes up to 2,300 euros.
261 We want to prevent small self-employed persons from having to apply for
262 basic security. Therefore, in areas that experience a longer lockdown, a
263 kind of short-time work compensation is to be paid. The benefit should be
264 55 percent of the respective taxable profit of the last years, at most 1,500
265 Euro/month.

266 • We want to ease the burden on private and commercial tenants. The loss of
267 domiciles due to the crisis must be prevented. In addition to the measures
268 taken by the federal government, financial support for tenants with crisis-
269 related loss of income is therefore needed in the form of a fund or
270 programme by the KfW bank. Electricity, heating, water and telephone or
271 Internet disconnections may not be completed during the crisis. Companies
272 and businesses that are directly affected by the pandemic lockdown and can
273 hardly catch up in terms of income should be given the legal opportunity to
274 reduce or even suspend rents. The Austrian regulation can serve as a model
275 for this, which in the General Civil Code allows the obligation to pay rent
276 to be waived if the property cannot be used due to "extraordinary
277 incidences", which also includes a pandemic. Landlords who are dependent
278 on these rent payments should then receive state support. The Corona crisis
279 may not lead to further market concentration of a few housing companies.

280 • Trainees should be able to apply for short-time work benefits of 100
281 percent at any time. We want to prevent apprenticeships from falling victim
282 to the current situation. In addition, it must be ensured that the time lost in
283 lessons does not have to be spent in the company, but can be used entirely
284 for independent learning.

285 *Accelerate the ecological modernisation of industry*

286 In order to help the industrial companies that are facing existential hardships due to
287 the pandemic, we want to offer generous state support. At the same time, the
288 investments should also serve the ecological modernisation that is necessary in any
289 case, so that companies do not miss their entry into the climate-neutral age by
290 taking the wrong turn now. Direct aid should therefore promote investments that
291 serve one of the six EU environmental goals (taxonomy). And companies must
292 comply with certain social standards. In addition, the proposal of the German
293 government's Sustainable Finance Advisory Council should be taken up: If
294 companies can prove that they operate in accordance with the Paris Climate
295 Convention, they should be granted a partial waiver of the loans that the state now
296 grants as aid at the end of the repayment period.

297 *Our proposals:*

298 • By directly promoting innovation and investment, we want to encourage
299 investment in transformative CO₂-free processes and procedures through
300 direct grants for so-called lighthouse projects. In this way, we want to
301 supplement EU funding programs and also offer tax incentives by means of
302 degressive depreciation of investments made in transformative CO₂-free
303 industrial processes amounting to at least 25 percent.

304 • We want to accelerate the entry into the green hydrogen economy. In this
305 way we are driving forward climate protection and higher investments in
306 industrial sectors such as steel and chemicals as well as in air, shipping and
307 freight transport. To that end, we offer investment grants for hydrogen
308 pipelines and creating innovation and experimental areas to better test
309 various business models and applications.

310 • With climate agreements we want to create investment security - especially
311 in the climate-intensive industry. In this way, we want to reimburse the
312 difference between the current CO₂ price and the actual CO₂ avoidance
313 costs incurred by companies as a result of investments in new processes
314 and technologies. To that end, the best projects are to be identified in a
315 competitive tendering process and climate contracts (Carbon Contracts for
316 Difference) concluded with the appropriate companies.

317 • We want to reduce the price of electricity for citizens and in particular
318 small and medium-sized enterprises by reducing the EEG (Renewable
319 Energy Sources Act) levy by five cents per kilowatt hour from 1 July 2020.
320 Wind and solar energy are the cheapest sources of energy today, thanks to
321 the EEG. This technological development has also been made possible by
322 electricity consumers. In addition to the electricity sector, however, the
323 heating, mobility and industrial sectors must also be decarbonised with
324 green energy, e.g. via electric mobility, heat pumps and much more. A
325 lowered EEG levy, counter-financed by the federal budget, contributes to
326 this. By the end of 2021, a purchasing power effect of 22 billion euros can
327 be achieved. In the middle term, the measure is financed by the income
328 from the CO₂ price.

329 • Thanks to the now attractive costs, we can also provide economic impetus
330 in the renewables sector by accelerating expansion - without incurring
331 additional costs for the state. The photovoltaic cap of 52 gigawatts must be
332 lifted immediately, more restrictive spacing regulations for wind turbines
333 may not be introduced, and existing ones that are too far-reaching must be
334 eliminated. Subsequently, we need an ambitious amendment to the EEG:
335 instead of small changes, fundamental steps must be taken to accelerate the
336 expansion of wind and solar energy, to promote sector coupling and to
337 achieve a participatory energy shift that is close to the people.

338 • To ensure that economic impulses have a lasting effect, we will create a
339 resilient investment and refinancing framework for renewable and system
340 integration technologies with a participatory energy market design. In this
341 way, we unleash private innovative power, while at the same time taking
342 advantage of private households' favourable capital costs and realising our
343 claim to democratic participation.

344 • The construction sector is at the heart of an economic recovery plan.
345 Ambitious energy-efficient building refurbishment not only helps the
346 climate - it also strengthens the economy and creates qualified jobs in the
347 trades and in production. We need more effective support systems for the
348 climate-friendly replacement of fossil heating systems and significantly
349 more building insulation. In concrete terms, we will first double the

350 existing support for the replacement of oil-fired heating systems and set up
351 an equity fund for municipal utilities. We are also providing targeted
352 support for the construction or conversion of climate-friendly heating grids
353 or renewable heating concepts involving geothermal and solar thermal
354 energy.

355 • We will also launch an energy efficiency offensive in trade and industry
356 and set up a support programme and appropriate regulatory requirements to
357 steer the numerous upcoming reinvestments in the right direction.

358 • As was already the case during the financial crisis, a degressive special
359 depreciation allowance limited to two years should be introduced for
360 corporate investments.

361 • We provide financial support to help energy-intensive data centres reduce
362 their power consumption and switch to renewable energies and energy-
363 efficient water cooling systems. In this way, we are also making a
364 contribution to advancing the digital sovereignty of Europe.

365 The automotive industry is a key sector of our industry with massive significance
366 for hundreds of thousands of jobs and countless suppliers. Even before the Corona
367 pandemic, the automotive industry was in crisis mode, and this has now intensified
368 massively. Companies and employees are very uncertain as to how things will
369 progress, what market development will take place and whether jobs can be
370 secured. The industry must change fundamentally.

371 We propose a future alliance of companies, trade unions and environmental
372 associations to overcome the recession, advance the ecological transformation and
373 secure employment. This combines targeted short-term aid with the urgently
374 needed move towards sustainable mobility. This includes ecological purchase
375 incentives and financial aid for modernisation. The purchase incentives must be
376 focused on climate-neutral mobility, because it would be counterproductive in
377 terms of climate policy and industrial policy to continue to promote combustion
378 engines with billions in aid. In return, environmentally harmful subsidies must be
379 dismantled and a bonus-malus system must be introduced in the vehicle tax,
380 placing a greater burden on emission-intensive vehicles such as SUVs and a lesser
381 burden on lower-emission vehicles. In addition, quotas for emission-free mobility
382 must be introduced and the EU fleet limits must be adjusted in line with the Paris
383 Climate Treaty.

384 The economic stimulus measures that are now necessary offer a great opportunity
385 for an ecological turnaround, especially in the transport sector: Citizens who give
386 up their private cars and do not buy a new one can claim a mobility bonus to help
387 finance climate-friendly alternatives such as a BahnCard, an annual public
388 transport pass, a freight bicycle or, car or bike-sharing services. More cars are not
389 the solution. Municipalities will also receive a conversion bonus to promote
390 climate-friendly mobility offers, such as the expansion of urban bus networks, the
391 development of sharing services or an expanded bicycle path infrastructure. In this
392 way we ensure that climate-friendly transport services do not deteriorate as a result
393 of the crisis and that more people are persuaded to switch away from private cars
394 in the medium term.

395 Like the automotive industry, the aviation industry has also been hit hard. Like the
396 automotive industry, government aid would have to be linked to regulatory
397 requirements. As in other European countries, a CO₂ reduction strategy in line with
398 the Paris climate targets for aviation must be presented in this context, which
399 would reduce the overall volume of air traffic. This can be achieved, for example,
400 by closing routes for shorter domestic flights, extending the ban on night flights or
401 renewing the aircraft fleet with more efficient and less polluting aircraft.

402 **IV. Investments in the future**

403 We should now prepare a ten-year investment programme of 500 billion euros. In
404 our local communities alone, there is a backlog of 138 billion euros in renovation
405 work, and this does not even include ecological investments such as the expansion
406 of public transport. What we need right now are strong local communities that are
407 capable of taking action on the ground, be it in social services or women's shelters.
408 State investment must therefore be increased not only during the crisis, but also on
409 a permanent basis. The economic research institutes of companies and trade unions
410 estimate that more than 450 billion euros are needed for investment. Added to this
411 are investments in our healthcare system, the necessity of which was made clear to
412 us by Corona. Our hospitals alone have an additional investment requirement of at
413 least six billion euros per year. And the challenges the nursing care sector faces are
414 also large.

415 Federal and state politicians should do everything possible to get these investments
416 off the ground. This includes starting planning processes now and making planning
417 law less bureaucratic or suspending regulations for a limited period. Especially
418 now, the public sector should hire planners and project managers and increase the
419 number of approval authorities so that the additional investments can be built. To
420 that end, the federal government should, by means of an administrative agreement,
421 set up a fund with the states from which additional planning offices can be paid
422 over a period of at least five years. Many investments lie with the municipalities
423 and many of them are overburdened by previous encumbrances.

424 The collapse of trade tax revenues is making this situation much worse. The
425 federal and state governments must enable local communities to make a fresh start
426 with an old debt fund by relieving them of a major portion of their old debts. They
427 can be permanently refinanced at low and currently even negative interest rates. In
428 addition, municipalities with particularly high social charges must be supported.
429 To that end, the federal government must in particular assume a higher share of the
430 costs of housing and heating.

431 This huge investment volume is money well spent, both to prevent a major global
432 depression with unforeseeable social and political consequences and to build up
433 more crisis-proof and sustainable new economic structures. Of course, it will
434 increase debt. In the coming years, public budgets will be under pressure to repay
435 these loans. At the same time, important investments in the future must not be
436 sacrificed to the crisis and no cuts may be made in basic municipal services,
437 infrastructure and social security. For sustainable financing of the costs of the
438 Corona crisis, therefore, credit financing with very long and flexible repayment
439 periods is necessary. And Germany is currently not paying interest on its debts.

440 Repayment too quickly and restrictively would jeopardise the state's economic
441 recovery and ability to invest.

442 We must therefore reform the “debt brake” to allow more credit-financed
443 investments. Time and again, Germany has found special forms of burden-sharing
444 after special challenges (Second World War, reunification). The crisis is
445 exacerbating the social divisions in Germany and Europe. Mass unemployment
446 and the consequences of a weak healthcare system will hit southern and eastern
447 European countries particularly hard. More and more Europeans are facing
448 existential questions, while a few have large assets and very high incomes. Over
449 and above the debts created by the Corona crisis, a policy is needed to prevent this
450 division. Once the acute crisis is over, we need effective instruments to mitigate
451 the social consequences, to share the costs of the crisis fairly and to keep the EU
452 together. Accordingly, we need a balance based on the principle that those who
453 have strong shoulders can carry more.

454 **V. Strengthening our healthcare system**

455 The Corona epidemic has revealed the strengths and weaknesses of our healthcare
456 system. Our healthcare system has a well-developed system of diagnostics, good
457 acute care with numerous intensive care beds and good technical equipment
458 compared to other European countries. At the same time, however, it has become
459 clear that there are considerable deficits, particularly in the personnel situation in
460 nursing care, in municipal healthcare, in access to the healthcare system, in digital
461 networking and in the procurement and stockpiling of protective equipment, which
462 need to be remedied.

463 Right now we have to strengthen our healthcare system as much as we can to get
464 this epidemic under control. The provision of reserve capacity for emergencies and
465 good, well-paid staffing must be a priority and must be at the heart of our efforts.
466 This should certainly be done economically, but with safety first. In concrete
467 terms, this means that we, as a society, must make investments in medical and
468 nursing infrastructure and investments in pandemic management worth more than
469 they have been to date. We need a significant upgrading and professional
470 strengthening of nursing care, more attractive working conditions and better
471 staffing. We must better equip the public health services, especially the health
472 authorities, which have been thinned out over the years, and improve the working
473 situation for people in the healthcare and nursing sectors. In order to improve
474 wages in the nursing sector, the parties to the collective agreement are to continue
475 the negotiations about collectively agreed pay in the nursing sector as soon as
476 possible, so that an agreement can be made generally binding in the near future. If
477 this is not achieved in spite of ongoing negotiations, legal measures will have to be
478 taken. The next step could be to oblige the social nursing care insurance system to
479 conclude agreements only with employers who pay collectively agreed rates.

480 The momentum in the digitisation of our health care system, which has been partly
481 created by the crisis, must be used to expand telemedicine and other digital
482 services that are useful for care management and research. Research data should be
483 easier to exchange, while respecting the protection of personal privacy, as should
484 medical logistics. We want an investment pact between the federal government

485 and the states to support hospitals, but also the public health service, in making the
486 necessary investments in the digital infrastructure.

487 With digital epidemiology, the state of health of the population can be analysed in
488 real time from a large amount of anonymised data, so that it is possible to
489 intervene in a more targeted manner and better counter a future epidemic. This is
490 not the only reason why the e-government of the administration in Germany must
491 be developed at full speed. Our virologists are world leaders and so are our
492 research institutions. If, on the other hand, health data still have to be sent from
493 office to office by fax because it is technically impossible to do otherwise, this is
494 now costing us valuable time in the fight against Corona.

495 **VI. Right to education, even in the pandemic**

496 The Coronavirus also holds up the mirror to education policy. There are the still
497 enormous injustices that the German education system produces - visible, for
498 example, in the different technical equipment available to pupils and their schools.
499 There are the structural and sanitary conditions of educational institutions, which
500 are inadequate in many places and cause even greater problems than usual in times
501 of pandemics. Then there is the situation of pupils with disabilities or other special
502 educational needs, which has become particularly acute during the crisis. There is
503 a fixation on exams and achievement certificates that is not appropriate to the
504 challenges of the future. This blocks the view of what is pedagogically and socially
505 necessary and ties up resources that are needed elsewhere. And, last but not least,
506 despite all the assertions, there is the still far too little emphasis placed on early
507 childhood education, when again only the label "care" is used to talk about daycare
508 centres. What is lacking in the first few years from an educational point of view
509 can often hardly be made up for. Educational policy has so far failed to respond
510 adequately to the challenges because it concentrates limited resources on fulfilling
511 curricula and taking exams instead of absorbing the social consequences of the
512 pandemic.

513 On the other hand, the commitment of many players is encouraging a real change
514 in education. Those responsible for education, school administrators, local
515 authorities, pedagogical specialists and teachers, but also parents and pupils are
516 finding new, pragmatic and creative solutions in this difficult situation. In doing
517 so, practitioners often take up what is actually the responsibility of politics and
518 administration, namely the adequate handling of such a crisis by our educational
519 institutions. For this we also owe them our gratitude.

520 Learning from the crisis is not just about a little bit of digitalisation; it is about
521 orienting the education system in such a way that people can act in a self-
522 determined, sustainable and enlightened manner. Once again, it is clear that the
523 future of our education system lies in a paradigm shift. This requires a move away
524 from a focus on plan fulfilment and reproducible, verifiable specialist knowledge
525 to support personal development, the development of crisis resilience and the
526 handling of uncertainties and ambiguities that characterise our time, even beyond
527 the current pandemic, and will continue to do so.

528 Digitisation in schools needs long-term financial support from the federal
529 government, not just a temporary funding pot once filled. The mega-task of

530 digitisation in education can only be accomplished by the federal and state
531 governments together. The willingness on all sides to connect the German
532 education system to the digital world has never been greater. It must not be a
533 matter of simply using digital tools for analogous thought and design in education.
534 The window for real innovation in our education system is as open as never before.
535 It is our task to use this window and to shape education in and for the 21st century -
536 under the conditions of digitisation, ecological and social challenges of the future.

537 Digitisation at universities and vocational schools must also be supported and
538 improved and access to online lectures must be ensured for all students. Teachers
539 must be supported in the use of digital tools. Without appropriate support,
540 accelerated digitisation at universities threatens to exacerbate social inequalities.
541 The Corona crisis must not lead to financial disadvantages for students who are
542 dependent on BAföG. For this reason, the current semester should not count
543 towards the standard period of study and thus towards BAföG.

544 In order to counteract the injustices in the education system, the further expansion
545 of good all-day education and care services is central. This is where the crisis
546 could possibly break open old blockades: If traditional education can only be
547 provided to a limited extent for a longer period of time, day-care centres and
548 schools should have the opportunity to create new learning and leisure facilities in
549 an unbureaucratic and flexible manner. Schools should be given a budget for this
550 purpose, which would come from federal funds as part of a social protection
551 shield. In addition, a catch-up programme for schools in disadvantaged regions and
552 urban districts will be more necessary than ever after the crisis, so that those who
553 were already threatened with being left behind before Corona do not lose touch.

554 It is also urgently necessary that strategies for the period after the summer holidays
555 are developed now within the framework of the Conference of Education
556 Ministers. These strategies must take up the manifold effects of the restricted
557 school operation in technical, pedagogical, but also emotional and social terms.
558 Curricula and school law provisions must be made more flexible and relieved for
559 the coming school year. As the current school year shows, average degrees can
560 relieve the burden on all those involved.

561 **VII. A New Opportunity for Europe**

562 All of Europe is affected by the Corona crisis. Our continent is currently the region
563 with the most infected people worldwide. Everyone is affected, some regions, such
564 as Lombardy, Alsace, Madrid especially so. As in the last financial crisis and the
565 refugee crisis, some European countries have lacked a spirit of solidarity and
566 Europeanism in the Corona crisis. The actions of the federal government in
567 financial policy issues and with the initial export restrictions on medical products
568 have also further weakened confidence in European solidarity.

569 Together with its European partners, the German government must ensure that the
570 divisions in the EU are not further aggravated by the pandemic. If Europe does not
571 stand together now, others will jump into the breach and try to extend their
572 geopolitical influence even further. The federal government must take a consistent
573 European approach to crisis management so that no new social injustice, youth

574 unemployment or lack of prospects arise - especially in Southern and Eastern
575 European Member States.

576 But there are many examples of European solidarity that encourage the belief that
577 the European idea continues to exist: European patients are being treated in
578 German hospitals, local help is being organised through European town twinning,
579 many people from civil society have started personal initiatives. We must see this
580 crisis as a turning point to deepen the sense of community. Then Europe can
581 emerge even stronger from this crisis.

582 We intend to return to the open borders of the Schengen area as soon as possible.
583 In combating Corona, Europe must stand by its values and remain open. Border
584 controls and entry bans must be medically justified, coordinated and proportionate.
585 Arbitrary border controls at the national level should be replaced by targeted
586 restrictions at the regional level (which should then also apply across borders). The
587 criteria do not have to be one hundred percent identical everywhere, but they must
588 be equally effective. Where necessary, the focus at the borders must be on the
589 question of the effective protection of health.

590 Europe needs to coordinate strategies for terminating the lockdown, also to prevent
591 supply chains from being disrupted. A European pandemic economy should aim at
592 a massive production of medical equipment and the best possible use of common
593 testing and treatment capacities. States should jointly organise or coordinate
594 procurement to avoid competition. European efforts in vaccine research should be
595 reinforced. We call for an EU Corona Research Fund for drugs and vaccines which
596 are then marketed under a public service licence. We need to be better prepared for
597 the next pandemic. To that end, the European Center for Disease Prevention and
598 Control (ECDC) must be strengthened and a European Health Corps must be
599 established. The Health Corps is to consist of regular staff from European
600 hospitals, who can be quickly mobilised in the event of a crisis and deployed in
601 particularly affected regions so that no hospital in Europe is unable to provide
602 adequate medical care to people who are not otherwise able to receive it. The
603 forthcoming German Presidency of the Council should also be used to re-establish
604 pharmaceutical production in Europe in order to avoid dependence on
605 transcontinental supply chains in these vital areas. The Corona crisis once again
606 shows how important sustainable management of supply chains is. It is good that
607 the EU Commission has announced a binding supply chain law.

608 With the decisions of the European Central Bank (ECB), a new financial and
609 currency crisis has been averted for the time being. Once again, the ECB had to
610 step in because the heads of state and government were unable to decide on
611 comprehensive measures for crisis management such as joint Corona Bonds. The
612 package of ESM aid, corporate loans from the European Investment Bank and the
613 European short-time working allowance that has now been agreed is a first step,
614 but it is not sufficient.

615 If too little is done in countries like Spain and Italy for fear of over-indebtedness,
616 this will not only impact the people there hard, but in the end all members of the
617 Union will be affected. The German economy in particular is closely linked to
618 these countries. If German products are no longer bought there, this will lead to a
619 sharp rise in unemployment in our country. And if production cannot restart there

620 because of the pandemic, the interwoven supply chains in this country will bring
621 the production lines to a standstill. Only if Italy gets back on its feet will Germany
622 do so as well. China will try to shop around in the European economy in the
623 coming recession and Putin will use the opportunity to destabilise European
624 democracies. Only if Europe looks after its interests together will Southern and
625 Eastern Europe in particular be able to reject these offers.

626 This European response must include a joint Recovery Fund, financed by mutual
627 bonds, in order to shoulder the burden of the crisis together and in solidarity.
628 Spending should be geared to the Paris Climate Protection goals and the Green
629 Deal. The Recovery Fund should have a volume of at least one trillion euros and
630 thus be commensurate with the seriousness and scale of the challenge. The debt
631 should not count towards national debt ratios and should be shouldered according
632 to economic performance. Such joint liability would allow for interest rates below
633 inflation. The Recovery Fund must be subject to strict anti-corruption monitoring
634 and parliamentary control.

635 While many companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises and the
636 retail trade in the city centres, are currently suffering, large digital groups are
637 making huge profits. At the same time, they pay less tax than comparable
638 traditional companies. This is why now would be the time, at the latest, for the
639 federal government to oppose this tax dumping and to abandon its blockade of the
640 European Digital Tax. Even the EU Commission's proposal to tax the sales of large
641 digital companies at three percent in the place where they operate would result in
642 estimated revenues of five billion euros. If individual EU member states continue
643 to block this step, a coalition of the willing is needed as a first step towards a
644 European and global solution.

645 In this crisis, the German government's years of braking and refusal to act on
646 central European issues is proving to be a significant encumbrance. After the
647 crisis, the European Union must finally tackle the decisions that have been
648 postponed for years on the completion of economic and monetary union, such as a
649 separate EU budget with its own fiscal policy instrument, dealing with trade
650 imbalances and the completion of the banking union. A larger EU budget from
651 2021 onwards would also mean a larger German contribution and more
652 opportunities for the Union to generate its own revenues in order to structurally
653 strengthen the EU. In order to reposition Europe, the federal government need not
654 assume every proposal from other countries, but it must finally make its own
655 constructive proposals to solving the problems and not just continue to refuse and,
656 in the event of a crisis, shift the entire economic policy responsibility onto the
657 European Central Bank. Among the necessary issues is the review of the Stability
658 and Growth Pact.

659 The importance of one's own fundamental convictions is particularly evident in the
660 crisis. The federal government must therefore also take a stand against the
661 threatened dismantling of the rule of law, separation of powers and freedom of the
662 press in some EU Member States – together with European partners, especially in
663 the course of the forthcoming German EU Council Presidency. We call on the EU
664 Commission to examine all national measures to combat the Corona pandemic in
665 EU Member States to ensure that they comply with European law and, where
666 necessary, to intervene accordingly. In order to discuss the EU's responses to the

667 crisis with all Europeans, the German government must work in the Council to
668 ensure that the Conference on the Future of Europe is used to that end.

669 The world will only survive this pandemic well with a spirit of cooperation. As
670 interconnected as the world is, most nation states continue to act shortsightedly and
671 selfishly at present. If Europe acts in cooperation and solidarity, we will create a
672 strong and irresistible counter-narration with a global impact. The whole world is
673 fighting this Corona pandemic. That is why, in the pandemic, customs duties on
674 products vital for survival must be abolished and export restrictions lifted. Seven
675 billion people are waiting for a vaccine and drugs against COVID-19, and it must
676 be ensured that both, once available, are available globally, quickly and at a
677 reasonable price.

678 We must therefore think about relaxing the rules on intellectual property and call
679 on intellectual property owners to offer favourable licences in an international
680 patent pool coordinated through the WTO - especially for a newly developed
681 vaccine or recognised therapy. The global recession threatens to become an
682 accelerator of the debt crisis in developing and emerging countries, and thus of
683 poverty, flight and conflict. Germany must work to ensure that the debts of the
684 global South are cancelled. Furthermore, a significant increase in the Special
685 Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund is needed to be
686 better armed against the speculative flight of capital. The European Central Bank
687 should examine to what extent it can assist developing and emerging countries
688 with further currency swap agreements in the event of the flight of capital. The
689 fight against illegal financial flows must be intensified. We must not allow global
690 inequalities to become even worse. We need a global aid package against the
691 Coronavirus and its consequences and a strengthening of the United Nations.

692 We support the UN Secretary General's call for global ceasefires. The German
693 government should use its influence with European and international partners to
694 work towards this goal. It must make quickly available sufficient additional funds
695 for development cooperation and humanitarian aid. At the same time, the
696 international community and German humanitarian aid and development
697 cooperation may not relax measures in existing health programmes.

698 **VIII. Stronger from the crisis**

699 The pandemic makes us aware of what we miss and what we are determined to
700 regain: Our freedom, social proximity and the complexity of our lives; public
701 spaces; day-care centres, schools and universities; direct exchanges with
702 colleagues at work; culture and colourful life, with bars, cinemas, concerts, lively
703 city centres that we continue to miss and that are now struggling to survive; our
704 united and open Europe.

705 The lockdown has also shown us what we need to value and promote more:

706 The wisdom of an enlightened society capable of taking preventive action; living
707 in a functioning democratic constitutional state; our public services, a vibrant local
708 community and a strong welfare state; independent quality media and public
709 service broadcasting; people in solidarity and a state in solidarity; clean air even in
710 the cities and congestion-free roads; the possibility of a home office; a

711 parliamentary cooperation between government and opposition that solves things
712 together instead of just working against each other.

713 Last but not least, the Corona crisis shows us what we have missed in the past.
714 There have been pandemic warnings and even pandemic emergencies with printed
715 matter from the Bundestag, but in reality, as a society, we were not sufficiently
716 prepared. We still have to learn resilience. This includes the fact that we cannot
717 rely on the market alone when it comes to the production of medicines and key
718 tools for combating epidemics. In Europe itself, we must be able to produce the
719 key medical products and medicines, as well as food that we need to live in an
720 emergency. This means that we must better protect critical infrastructures, for
721 example from large-scale IT attacks. We must promote digitisation, we must
722 strengthen Europe and multilateral institutions and we must understand that the
723 overexploitation of natural ecosystems increases the risk of epidemics. For
724 example, outbreaks of infectious diseases have been on the increase over the last
725 40 years. About two thirds of these are zoonoses, that is, diseases that have been
726 transmitted from animals to humans. We must do more to combat the causes of
727 zoonoses and at the same time prepare ourselves to better control epidemics in the
728 future.

729 Only if we reflect self-critically can we better arm ourselves against future
730 disasters. Politically, prevention is the most difficult thing of all. But Corona
731 shows us every day how important it is. Accordingly, our aim in this paper is to
732 adopt guidelines for the next steps beyond the immediate fight against the crisis
733 and to draw the right lessons from the experience of recent weeks. We want to be
734 faster than the virus, so that its worst consequences can be prevented and we can
735 emerge from the crisis stronger than we entered it.