



FOR A SHARED SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SECURITY POLICY IN EUROPE

For more than a year Russia has waged a brutal war of aggression against Ukraine. The war is a break with the European peacetime order. Russian President Putin is not only breaking with the Helsinki Accords' commitment not to change borders within Europe by force. He is also breaking with the Charter of the United Nations. This blatant breach of international law is unacceptable.

Russia's aggression makes clear that we must organize security in Europe without Russia for the foreseeable future. This realization will guide our policies and shape our close ties with partner countries in Eastern and Central Europe. It is essential to understand the impact of the war on our Central and Eastern European partners in the EU and NATO. The war against Ukraine is perceived as a direct threat to their security and peace. The fear that Russia will expand the war beyond Ukraine's borders worries people, especially in Eastern and Central Europe. Germany has not paid attention to this for too long. That was a mistake. It is now a matter of rebuilding trust.

The war is therefore also a turning point for Germany's recent policies towards Central and Eastern Europe. Our objective is to foster security and peace in Europe and to build a new security order that places greater emphasis on the interests and needs of our partners in Eastern and Central Europe. Instead of a special German relationship with Russia, we aim to jointly develop a new common European policy on dealing with Russia. At the same time, we must seize the European momentum and position a sovereign Europe as a strong centre in a world in upheaval.

TURNING POINT IN GERMAN FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

The Social Democratic-led government has opened a new chapter in German foreign and security policy. The turning point („Zeitenwende“) in German foreign policy is real:

- At the beginning of the war, Germany broke with its long-standing principle of not supplying weapons to war zones. Today, Germany is one of the largest and most reliable supporters of Ukraine in terms of military, financial and humanitarian aid.
- Through the United Nations, the G7 and G20, as well as in bilateral talks, Germany has successfully taken the initiative with partners to build global coalitions to condemn the war and warn against its spread.
- As the largest and economically strongest country in Europe, Germany is aware of its pivotal role in European security. With the 100-billion-euro special fund for the Bundeswehr, we aim to significantly increase our spending on national and alliance defence.
- In order for Europe to live up to its geopolitical responsibility, Germany is pushing ahead with EU membership negotiations with Northern Macedonia, Albania, as well as for Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and, in the long term, Georgia.

LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

We all want the war to end as soon as possible, for the suffering of Ukrainians to end, for Ukraine to regain its territorial integrity and progress towards a brighter future as a European state. We are supporting Ukraine with military, financial and humanitarian aid so that it is in a strong negotiating position with Russia when the time is right. We will also ensure Ukraine's defence capability in the long term, take a leading role in reconstruction, and politically advance its integration into the European Union.

FIVE POINTS FOR A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

We must develop a new security and peace order in Europe in close cooperation with our partners in Eastern and Central Europe. We are linked not only by a long and mutual history, but also by deep social, cultural, political and economic ties. Security, peace, prosperity and stability can only be achieved together in and for Europe. These goals unite us as Social Democrats in Europe. Therefore, we aim to expand our cooperation, build trust and, based on our values and interests, work for a strong Europe with a new sense of community. A new partnership policy should be guided by the following five points:

- 1) Develop a sovereign Europe:** Europe's unity in response to the Russian war of aggression shows what we are capable of together. In order to help shape the global order according to our values and interests in a world in upheaval and to advocate a rules-based international order, we must make Europe more sovereign and resilient in the years ahead. This includes a common European foreign policy that is capable of making decisions and taking action and gives Europe more weight as a foreign policy actor.
- 2) Establish a common security architecture for Europe:** We will significantly expand the European contribution to NATO, our national and alliance defence capabilities and joint military capabilities at EU level. In doing so, we will provide answers to the security concerns of our partners in Eastern and Central Europe. Germany is taking its responsibility seriously and expanding its commitment, for example by increasing the presence of the Bundeswehr in Lithuania or stationing Patriot air defence systems in Poland. Securing peace in Europe includes a credible deterrent against Russia.
- 3) Ensure energy sovereignty:** The massive expansion of renewable energies, infrastructure for green hydrogen and cross-border European energy networks is our guarantee for energy independence from Russia. At the same time, we are responding to the climate crisis and securing our economic competitiveness through modern industrial and innovation policy.
- 4) Strong democracies for a resilient Europe:** Democracy and the rule of law are distinctive characteristics of the European Union and essential for the trust of our citizens in the community. This includes the promotion of a strong civil society, a free press, a free party system and a social market economy - all achievements that autocrats like Putin reject and fight against. Therefore, defending our democratic and constitutional values against enemies from outside and within is one of our most important tasks.
- 5) Demands to Russia:** There can be no normalization of relations with Russia as long as the Putin regime continues to pursue its imperialist goal of conquering and oppressing sovereign states. Only on the basis of and acceptance of rules and norms of international law is a rapprochement and understanding with a future Russian regime conceivable. Here, a common European Russia policy is necessary.

German Social Democracy believes in involving our European partners and working together to advance the security and further development of a sovereign Europe. Here, Germany has a clear leadership role to play. We will live up to this responsibility. Over the past year, the SPD has been working on repositioning Social Democratic foreign and security policy. The position paper "Social Democratic responses to a world in transition" is an invitation to debate and dialogue.