

## **We look at the big picture.**

Dear Readers,

We would like to take stock. The Greens can look back on four years of work at the German Bundestag. In 2005 we had to leave government and move to the opposition benches. This transition was by no means easy. Having said this, we took to our new role very quickly and turned our parliamentary group into an ideas workshop. In all of this, we remained true to our understanding of opposition – taking a tough stance towards the government but being constructive at all times with regard to the matters in hand.

We have used the past four years as an opportunity to develop new concepts and to enhance our Green ideas. Towards the end of this legislative period we adopted a pioneering role in the German Bundestag in working to modernise our country.

The following pages provide you with some insights into our work. It goes without saying that our activities cannot all be presented in this brochure. The contents therefore make no claim to be complete – it was simply not possible to include the whole spectrum of Green parliamentary activities. While reading the brochure you will gain a clear idea of the focuses of our policies – climate and jobs, social justice and freedom.

At present, the economic crisis would seem to be crowding out all other topics. This is not the case in our party. Unlike the Grand Coalition, which has strung together endless individual measures, we Greens try to see the whole picture. The climate and jobs are two sides of the same coin, as are social justice and freedom. The government is attempting yet again to play off ecological and economic considerations. The opposite is the case – tomorrow's economy has to be ecologically rooted, the green market economy. This kind of economy needs social justice, reflected not only in people's purses, but also in terms of genuine equality of access and participation. Equally, if a society fails to protect freedom – for all of its people – then its other assets and achievements are worthless. This is something we should not forget this year as the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall draws near. The current crisis presents us with the challenge of renewing our country – ecologically, economically and socially. We Greens are ready to seize this opportunity in all of its facets.

Ideas for tomorrow's jobs are crucial in this respect. We have just published our concept here, which shows how we could create a million new and sustainable jobs within four years by drawing on Green ideas – jobs in education and childcare, jobs in healthcare and nursing care, jobs in renewable energies and building modernisation, jobs in ecological agriculture and by reducing illegal employment.

The Greens' work in opposition is bearing fruit. On the one hand, we have sharpened the profile of our programme, a process which also involved holding debates and reaching decisions in some areas. On the other hand, we can point to tangible results in convincing our political competitors of some of our ideas. Two examples will have to suffice here: the Bundestag now procures 100 percent of its electricity from renewable energies and is converting its extensive car pool to more environmentally-friendly models. In both cases, the impetus for these improvements came from initiatives within our parliamentary group.

We cannot deny that we feel a certain sense of satisfaction when we see Green policies and concepts setting the tone. Other parties in the Bundestag also seem to be becoming increasingly "green". However, in the legislative period reviewed in this brochure, it has become clear that the other parties like to hold green speeches at the weekend, but on Monday morning it is an entirely different story. When the going gets tough, Angela Merkel, Germany's self-proclaimed "Climate Chancellor", has proven time and again to be a lobbyist for the old industrial society. And when new coal-fired power stations or cars were on the

agenda, then Sigmar Gabriel, Federal Environment Minister, was also nowhere to be found on the ecological side of the debate. This all underlines a simple truth – only the Greens can be relied on to be green!

Politics is all about the people involved. This review gives us the opportunity to express our thanks, to say thank you to the many employees of the parliamentary group without whose commitment and competence our efforts would not have succeeded. And then we would like to offer a very special thank you to nine members of our parliamentary group who will not be sitting in the next parliament and will thus no longer form part of the Green parliamentary group in the next legislative period. These are the following Members of Parliament: Dr. Thea Dückert, Dr. Uschi Eid, Peter Hettlich, Anna Lührmann, Winfried Nachtwei, Irmingard Schewe-Gerigk, Grietje Staffelt, Rainder Steenblock and Silke Stokar. They have all played an active role in shaping the work of the Greens in the German Bundestag and have represented the Greens both within and especially outside parliament, in some cases for more than 25 years. The parliamentary group will miss their expertise, their skills and their personalities. We very much hope that they will nevertheless accompany us in future in one way or another.

We aim to re-enter government after the federal elections in September. We have emerged from four years of constructive opposition in even more robust shape. We have offered convincing political alternatives to the "more of the same" approach adopted by the Grand Coalition. We have not allowed ourselves to be lulled by the simplistic slogans of the parliamentary groups of the FDP or the Linkspartei, which only offer the same old formulas. We have adopted clear positions and held the Federal Government to account. Our ideas are more relevant than ever. In short: the only way out of the crisis is Green!

#### **Review 2005-2009**

Climate (<http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/english/dok/306/306448@de.html>)

Jobs (<http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/english/dok/306/306468@de.html>)

Social Justice (<http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/english/dok/306/306474@de.html>)

Freedom (<http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/english/dok/306/306475@de.html>)

Green Global (<http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/english/dok/306/306507@de.html>)

#### **Download**

Reader: We look at the big picture