

Addicted to freedom.

An open and free society

Our model of an open society formed a key focus of our policies once again in the past four years. We brought in a whole range of initiatives to enable self-assured citizens to live without fear of surveillance and to develop their abilities in a society which is both free and safe. This way, we aim to protect the population against excessive state intrusion – consistent with our understanding of a free and safe world. We must combat terrorism and other forms of crime without disproportionately curtailing citizens' right to freedom. We have presented a coherent concept for this area as well. We Greens defend the rule of law in a free society.

Protecting the private sphere and the press

One example of what this involves is closely monitoring and limiting the increasing volume of telephone surveillance. We successfully pushed for judges to have to provide a detailed substantiation, a time limit and an annual report when issuing telephone surveillance orders. We have insisted on effective protection for confidential conversations in particular. Together with more than 30,000 citizens, we are fighting against the Data Retention Act at the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe. We are convinced that this law infringes on people's right to confidential communication and is also unsuitable as an instrument in the fight against serious crime.

We must especially protect the freedom of the press, as is clear from the latest cases of searches in editorial offices and private premises. We have made specific proposals as to how journalists can be protected against unjust state interference.

Data protection into the Basic Law

Freedom also involves being able to determine how your own personal data is used. That is becoming increasingly difficult, both in our dealings with the state and in our private lives. We are filmed in public places, our flight data is passed on to the USA, our purchases are documented online and at stores, there is a buoyant market for our addresses and telephone numbers and our fingerprints are stored in our passports.

We brought in a draft bill for data protection to be included in the Basic Law. This is because we are convinced that modern data protection has to keep up with technical developments. We want to set down in law which methods the secret services and police are allowed to use. Based on our plans, the Federal Data Protection Officer should then monitor compliance. It has recently become very apparent how poorly employees are protected against spying at some companies. Even before these scandals, we called for employee data protection legislation to increase the powers of company data protection managers and significantly raise penalties and fines.

Securing transparency and involvement

Freedom also includes the possibility of actively helping to shape our society. With our draft bill for direct democracy we made a renewed attempt to anchor greater rights of involvement in the Basic Law. This legislation provides for popular initiatives, petitions for referendums and referendums on federal level. As in the previous legislative period, it was blocked by the CDU/CSU.

One important precondition for freedom is transparency. People who reveal social evils such as corruption require special protection. We have suggested clarifying the relevant sections of the German

Civil Code to support civil courage and provide better protection for whistleblowers. We want to reduce unfair influences in the political arena by introducing a register of lobbyists and increasing the penalties for bribing members of parliament. We also believe that the secret services need to be controlled more closely. In view of this, we brought in a draft bill to increase the powers of the parliamentary supervisory body.

State bodies wishing to place orders worth more than Euro 25,000 should have access to a corruption register to show which companies have been proven to be involved in money laundering, corruption, subsidy fraud, breach of trust, illegal employment, falsification of financial accounts and so on. We wish to promote companies that are demonstrably "clean".

The struggle for equal rights continues

Any exclusion of people on account of their gender, background or sexual identity, age, religion or worldview or due to disability represents a massive infringement of their civil liberties. That's why we are fighting discrimination – in Germany and on a European level. The Green parliamentary group has called for a new start for the Antidiscrimination Office of the Federal Government. We have campaigned for barriers to be removed for people living with disabilities. We have exerted pressure on the Grand Coalition to abolish disadvantages for same-sex civil partnerships in many areas, and with some success – from inheritance law through to the compensation of victims. In terms of federal civil service law, however, Wolfgang Schäuble, Interior Minister, has maintained his tough course against gays and lesbians. The fight for equal rights continues.

Acting consistently to combat right-wing extremism across the board

Neo-Nazis spread antidemocratic, hateful ideology, treat other people with great brutality and thus represent a threat to our freedom. We have to boost our democracy's immunity to right-wing extremism. To this end, members of the Green parliamentary group went on tour nationwide. At events such as "Youth Culture and Right-Wing Extremism" and "A Red Card for Violence and Intolerance in the Stadium", they made contact with those affected, as well as with the relevant initiatives and players within civil society, thus promoting dialogue and the establishment of networks.

We have campaigned for a cross-party consensus on the part of the democratic parties against right-wing extremism, an approach which also showed some success in the form of a cross-party motion condemning anti-Semitism. Where necessary, the state must also intervene – the banning of the Nazi training organisation "Heimatreue Deutsche Jugend" and the training centre "Collegium Humanum" were largely due to Green initiatives. However, prevention remains key. One of our main priorities is to provide highly-motivated action groups with permanent financing from federal funds. We succeeded in averting cuts here in the past legislative period.

Competent in the media society

In a media society, freedom also involves having access to a wide variety of media and participating in various forms of communication. Computer games are not always a waste of time. On the contrary, they harbour great potential for conveying knowledge and computer handling skills. We want to see more "good" games on the shelves. That's why we have campaigned for a seal to label high-quality computer games.

Media society competence also means being able to switch off now and then, especially for the younger generation. More than a million people in Germany are now thought to be addicted or threatened by addiction to the internet. Appropriate media education helps to avoid addiction. Internet addiction can have numerous causes. We Greens have therefore proposed recognising media addiction as a separate psychological dependency. We have also pushed for the targeted promotion of media competence

among the elderly, so as to improve this generation's integration into the information society.

Freedom for art

Art also requires freedom. Culture needs space to enable it to pursue absolutely fundamental issues without having to worry constantly about economic limitations. What's more, art and culture must be freely accessible to all. In this legislative period we therefore had a special focus on improving conditions for artists and those working in the cultural sector. We are convinced that free access to art and culture should depend neither on people's purses nor on their postcode. We have therefore pressed for improved financing and structures in this area, for the promotion of lifelong learning and for the pilot project "An Instrument for Every Child" to be realised on federal level.

Staunch in our defence of human rights

For many minorities and disadvantaged sections of the world's population, freedom is also a question of universal human rights. This area has always been in the focus of our policies. The parliamentary group renewed its commitment once more with its resolution "Cornerstones of Green Human Rights Policies" adopted upon the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, has spoken of the need to take action when it comes to asserting human rights. That is relevant to all areas of human life. In the past four years we ensured that neglected topics and groups in particular, such as the Uyghur people in China and the Roma and Sinti people in Europe, were placed on the agenda at the German Bundestag. Over and above this, we launched initiatives aimed at strengthening human rights in general and at ensuring that companies meet their obligations in this respect. We support initiatives for refugees' rights. We press for equal rights and a general ban on discrimination. And we fight for women's rights as a key component of human rights.

No peace without freedom

On a global level, freedom is intrinsically linked to security and peace. Anyone aiming to achieve all of these objectives must build up international trust, press ahead with disarmament and promote peaceful policies. Our peace and security concept calls for Germany to set a good example in the field of civilian crisis prevention work, as well in terms of promoting trust, disarmament and international peacekeeping.

Mutual security can only be achieved by means of global disarmament. If we are not prepared to implement unilateral disarmament, verifiable arms restrictions and universal solutions, then we will not be able to control the proliferation of atomic, biological, chemical and conventional weapons. The Green parliamentary group has called for US atomic weapons to be removed from German territory. NATO has to get away from atomic weapons. We have campaigned for the rapid implementation of the ban on cluster bombs, better checks on the export of small arms, improved aid to victims and a ban on depleted uranium (DU) munition. The Green parliamentary group has pressed for the rapid ratification and further development of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe. And we are committed to achieving a new anti-ballistic missile treaty.

Germany is the world's third-largest arms exporter. The Grand Coalition promotes such business, even in crisis regions. That is irresponsible. We have presented concepts for a more restrictive and transparent arms export policy – one without state export subsidies. This way, we aim to finally ban exports to crisis regions, disclose all exports and have them monitored by parliament.

Anyone really interested in "risking greater liberty" (Chancellor Merkel) must do without military service. The Green parliamentary group has shown that the German army (*Bundeswehr*) can be cut to 200,000 soldiers without any reduction in our security. Instead of troops, we need more well-trained civilian and police resources for international peacekeeping missions – to solve conflicts peacefully rather than

aggravating them further with arms exports and aggressive posturing.

Further information about this topic -->

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On www.gruene-bundestag.de >> Plenum >> Initiativen (<http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/initiativen/rubrik/4/4544.html>) you can find the following green motions (in german):

- BT-Drs. 16/9607 Data protection into the Basic Law (draft bill) (*Datenschutz ins Grundgesetz*)
- BT-Drs. 16/3827 Telecommunications supervision (draft bill) (*Telekommunikationsüberwachung*)
- BT-Drs. 16/576 Freedom of the press (draft bill) (*Pressefreiheit*)
- BT-Drs. 16/9780 Corruption register (draft bill) (*Korruptionsregister*)
- BT-Drs. 16/7016 Retention of data (amendment motion) (*Vorratsdatenspeicherung*)
- BT-Drs. 16/1622 Review guidelines on data retention (motion) (*Richtlinie zur Vorratsdatenspeicherung prüfen lassen*)
- BT-Drs. 16/237 Freedom to telephone without compulsory data storage (motion) (*Freiheit des Telefonverkehrs vor Zwangsspeicherung*)
- BT-Drs. 16/3423 Equal rights for civil partnerships (draft bill) (*Gleichstellung Lebenspartnerschaft*)
- BT-Drs. 16/7536 Equality of opportunities and antidiscrimination (motion) (*Chancengleichheit und Antidiskriminierung*)
- BT-Drs. 16/11757 The time is ripe for disarmament and arms controls (motion) (*Zeit für Abrüstung und Rüstungskontrolle ist reif*)

On www.gruene-bundestag.de >> Fraktion >> Beschlüsse (<http://www.gruene-bundestag.de/cms/beschluesse/rubrik/3/3814.html>) you can find the parliamentary group resolutions (in german):

- Killer games (*Killerspiele*)
- Media addiction (*Medienabhängigkeit*)
- Cornerstones of Green human rights policy (*Eckpunkte grüner Menschenrechtspolitik*)

Further topics

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>)

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

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