PP Political Platform

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Motion text

Democracy

Democracy and Rule of Law

We believe in democracy as one of the cornerstones of a free and just society. Democracy includes more than just elections – a strong and fair institutional framework, free and diverse media, human rights, and economic and social equality are all crucial. It is especially important that our political structures are inclusive and give a voice to minorities and the disenfranchised.

While we believe in democracy on the grassroots, going beyond the elections and decision-making process on the national level, manifesting in everyday live, we consider the democratic state, with free election, with the accessible and transparent law-making process, and with accountability of government and private actors to the law is crucial to achieve the full democratization beyond its traditional understanding.

Democracy on the state level

- An end to authoritarianism!
- Increased public participation in politics and engaging more young people from different backgrounds.
- Easily accessible and understandable information about politics, policies and political processes.
- Free media and improving the public media services outside the control of the goverments and political parties.
- Support for parliamentary democracies elected by system of proportional representation.
- Recognizing the key role of NGOs and activists in democracy: repealing laws that violate the independence of NGOs or the privacy of citizens.

Eastern Europe is threatened by the democratic backsliding. Many young democracies are still unconsolidated and vulnerable. In other countries, authoritarian tendencies caused the erosion of democracy, despite free elections, made them illiberal democracies or hybrid regimes. In Serbia, Georgia and Turkey, authorities manipulate the electoral results. Azerbaijan and Belarus are dictatorial states where human rights are not respected. Various countries

have already prohibited NGO work and even some of the EU counties in the region have laws that limit the human rights (Poland and Hungary).There have been instances of political arrests in many of these countries. Fighting with authoritarianism is the biggest challenge we have.

We believe in democracy as the fairest way of governance. But for democracy to fulfil this promise all citizens must have equal rights and the capacity to be involved in decision-making processes. Election systems must be representative and inclusive in order to give a voice to the disenfranchised and to avoid the unjust accumulation of power.

Additionally, there is not enough involvement of the people from different backgrounds in politics and policy creation. This includes insufficient involvement of young people, but also minorities such as gender minorities, racial minorities and sexual minorities. States that are striving towards democracy must include rights of these groups and focus on securing the rights of all people.

Rule of law & Separation of Powers

- Effective, transparent system of separation of powers.
- An independent judiciary, ensuring full and equal access to justice for all citizens, as well as accelerating the processing of cases and simplifying the court fees systems.
- Defining a European Code of Legislation that will define transparent and reliable rules for law-making in each country.

The protection of human rights depends on the rule of law. Equality, before the law is imperative for all societies for it, ensures that all people, regardless of their status, get equal access to the rights they are entitled to. It furthermore allows governmental decisions to be accessible, transparent and possible to challenge on an equal footing.

The functioning of institution has to be transparent and approachable for all citizens in order for it to be more democratic. This way we can ensure that institutions of the countries are doing efficient and good work that is there to help people, that is understandable to people, and that is open and fair for all.

Free Elections

- Free access for election observers: from domestic NGOs, election committees, and foreign ones.
- Ensuring good territorial representation in electoral system, as well as independence of local representatives.
- Strict control of collection and spending of money for the election campaigns.
- More accessible candidacy process: simplification of collecting signatures, enabling sufficient number of state media appearances for candidates.
- Strong sanctions against those who engage in electoral fraud.
- Stricter control for those who are in a charge for running the election process, as well as the observers.
- Introducing a 50% quota for women on electoral lists, as well as a zipper mechanism – alternating the placement of women and men on the list.

Fair and free elections is the first necessary step to democracy. Elections must be free from fraud and interference from local and foreign autocrats.

At the same time, we need to remember that fair elections are not enough for fully democratic society. There are other obstacles: influence of money on politics, concentration of power in parties and their leaders, insufficient funding and dependence of regulation and control bodies, legislation and institutional shortcomings or the lack of proper citizens' representation. All the instances of election rigging, blackmailing and buying votes should be instantly taken into consideration with utmost seriousness. In cases when election frauds have been noted, there should be lawful prosecutions and proceedings that would ensure that the democracy is protected. While EU has commented on the recent decline of the democracy in Eastern European region, the governments that were involved in these unlawful authoritarian doings weren't held legally responsible as should be the case in the democratic systems. This all needs to change to achieve full democracy!

Transparency and anti-corruption

- Practicing better laws when it comes to corruption as it is something that, in turn, affects all other areas of the society.
- Equal application of the law to all, including elites - corporations and the wealthy cannot just include in their costs penalties for breaking the law.
- Improving the work of independent, regulatory bodies.
- Measures to make corruption less attractive: strengthening the positions of employees, democratization of institutions, better education, reducing

poverty and inequality as tool to reduce corruption by making people less prone to it.

- Transparency of financial and real estate transactions: companies registered under the name of the true owner, trust funds must disclose the names of donors, a ban on anonymous investments in hedge funds and private equity - along with the creation of effective cross-border teams to enforce these rules.

- A ban on depositing funds in authoritarian countries and those that focus on secrecy of transactions, a ban on lawyers and accountants participating in such operations.

Transparency is a crucial element and backbone of democratic societies. Transparency provides powerful tools that enable people to hold their governments to account and help prevent abuse of power and corruption. We believe that transparency is not only a matter of justice, but it further enables people to empower themselves. We need better regulations when it comes to circling of money, stronger laws and fairer system that will punish those who take part in the corruptive processes. Bettering institutions and life quality on all levels will also help to fight corruption in the region.

Corruption is a problem in Eastern European countries, they occupy the last places in the Corruption Perceptions Index. We consider corruption to be one of the biggest threats to democracy and we demand more effective methods to combat it.

Strong, green and democratic local government

- The support of decentralization policies, with ensuring that the structure of the state (the location of offices, state institutions, etc.) does not support only the capital and the largest centres, and that decision-making power in local matters is transferred to the local level.

- Following the principles of the European Charter on Local Government, primarily those related to the independence and sufficiency of financial resources of local government, the limitation of central government supervision and consultation of local authorities when making decisions that affect life in the local community.

- Strengthening the role of, among others, associations of local governments, supra-local organizations in consultations on draft legal acts of the government and parliament and in submitting their own initiatives.

- Mandatory participatory budgeting in all municipalities with more than 20,000 inhabitants.

- Establishing advisory councils, especially Youth Advisory Councils to ensure the citizens' participation in the decision-making process.

- Establishment of Local Climate Agencies responsible for creating a catalogue of good practices for maintaining greenery and water management

in the city, which will be helpful for local government officials, as well as urban activists.

- Senior support program in local governments: discounts on health, recreational, educational and sports services provided by both private and public entities and free public transport, as well as co-financing the creation of senior clubs and establishing advisory councils of seniors at local government units.

- Strengthening local anti-corruption institutions, policies and control bodies.

While the role of local governments varies in every Eastern European country because of differences in size of the country, urbanization, percentage of citizens living in the country's capital, various units of territorial division or electoral laws, our postulates are applicable to every country. We believe that everywhere, decisions on local matters should be made by the local community, not in the capital, and not by local oligarchs, but by all citizens. This involves better self-government policies and more power for the municipalities, as well as better financial allocation on the state levels. We support self-governance at the grass-root level as the most non-discriminatory and just manifestation of democratic governance. We believe that local government should be inclusive to the general public to foster the decentralised and democratic local policies, finding local solutions to local problems.

Local government should also mean the friendly infrastructure and the high quality of public services, which is why it is necessary to finance local institutions and authorities.

Youth in the decision-making process

- Youth politics as a priority: recognition that young people are the future of Europe and all measures and policies will affect young people the most, thus need to be mainstreamed in all policies rather than “policies for youth” being a separate topic.

- Lowering the voting rights to 16 in all the elections.

- Introduction of Youth Councils of cities and municipalities as an obligatory consultative body of local government.

- Increased support to youth-led NGOs, both on national and European level.

- Increased support for youth-led activities in projects, where government and youth are working as equal partners.

- Mandatory EU Youth Test when introducing new regulations both on national and European level to evaluate the impact that any new proposals may have on young people.

- Having more initiatives and systems that would handle problems that directly concern youth in the whole Eastern Europrean region – these

include, but are not limited to, housing crisis, educational costs, work rights and political involvement of youth.

In the Eastern European countries, the political participation of young people is low. This is related to the generally low level of civil society and the lack of appropriate political education, as well as limited economical resources for youth. Funding opportunities are limited, young people lack adequate skills and education, and their demands and actions are often ignored by the media and politicians. Young people have no affordable housing and no job opportunities, so many of them keep being depended on their guardians and parents even after they reach 30s. This is especially problematic for young women who usually are becoming, in turn, depended of their husbands after marriage, having no independence in their young years. The entry of young people into politics in order to achieve a change or run in elections is made difficult by the current political elites who have been in office for several decades ignoring the problems of youth, thus concreting the political scene and having a negative impact on the perception of institutional politics among young people.

CDN supports youth rights in every aspect of social and political life and strive for making youth's voices heard. We believe that active citizenship should be encouraged among youth and, as a minimum, youth rights should be proactively defended in order to strengthen their position in society. The youth policies should be advocated for by young activists and politicians, which is why we want better institutions handling these questions and quotas for young people in the intuitions around Eastern Europe. As various young activists are in NGO sector, involvement of this sector in policy making would also help the rise of youth involvement.

Political participation

We strive for a democracy that enables and encourages active participation in the shaping of our common future. An appropriate environment for a sustainable and well-functioning civil society is of utmost importance for the development and stability of democratic practices. Voluntary action and active citizenship are important tool to strengthen democracy.

We believe in the democratic governance as a basis of all political and social institutions, not only on the state and local government level, but also at the grassroots, in schools and in the workplace. Thus, the support and space for civic society is crucial in the creating of the democratic society. This must start from the education that would involve better teachings about political systems, democracy and political participation, and active support of various initiatives, organisations and foundations that offer additional and non-formal education about these subjects.

Fighting the shrinking space for civic society

- Guarantee of strong civic space for NGOs so they can operate autonomously, free from any interference and retribution.
- Stronger state and international funding for NGOs.
- Accountability of governments for violations of NGOs freedom.
- Recognition and validation of voluntary work by employers and educational institutions, for example by recognising it as an important and valuable experience in CV at the similar level as work experience.
- Encouraging of community activism and human solidarity be by the legislative framework.
- Allowing citizens to dedicate a part of their income tax payments to civil society organisations of their choice.

In many of the Eastern European countries NGOs have been crucial when it comes to human rights, youth education, funding, political work and reconciliation processes. There have been instances where NGOs have been working hard to include policies and fight for political rights bringing finally certain laws to realisation, while government did nothing. When it comes to minorities, NGOs have also been doing had work in the region, giving various kinds of help, including legal help to those in need whose rights aren't always recognized rightfully by the state. On Balkan region, especially among ex-Yugoslav counties, NGOs did a lot of work when it comes to reconciliation and education regarding the war in 90s, providing additional help to those from the affected areas. All of these are the reasons why it is crucial to have NGO work and activists especially in the Eastern Europe.

Unfortunately, various countries NGO work is under threat. At some places, so called "foreign agent law" has already been put into action. This law has its origins in Russia, but variations of it have been adopted in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Hungary, while there were tries to introduce it in Bosnia. Despite protests and negative feedback, governments in these countries continue to push out NGOs and limit the activists' work.

We have to continue to fight for the right of NGOs to work, for progressive youth to get informal education, and for Eastern European countries to continue their democratic and European paths. Organisations not connected to government are crucial step when it comes to fighting authoritarian regimes, as the give freedom to the citizens, offer differ perspectives and provide important aspect to political life of states.

Citizens' participation in decision-making processes

- Legislative processes to be fair, transparent and accessible.
- Government documents and data, including but not limited to acts and regulations, projects, consultation reports and tender information, to be open and accessible.
- Ensuring the opportunity for the active participation of civil society in the design and management of public institutions.
- Implementing methods of engaging citizens into the design and execution of government services as participatory budgeting, citizens' panels, deliberative opinion polling, Charette workshops etc.
- Creating an official website with petitions, on which – after obtaining 10,000 signatures for a given petition – the government will have to respond to the issues contained therein, and after exceeding 100,000 signatures, the matter will have to be discussed in the national parliament.
- Creation of a nationwide social dialogue program, introducing the institution of broad social consultations on reform proposals in key state policies (education, health, etc.) - from the level of open meetings in municipalities to a central conference editing the final proposals and comments collected throughout the process. Consultations would be organized obligatorily in specific cases specified in the act or at the initiative of the government or parliaments.
- Providing citizens with access to free legal assistance in administrative matters.

Our vision is to create a government that operates with integrity, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to actively shape the future of our nation. To achieve this, we propose a government where the legislative process is fair, transparent, and accessible to all. We must recognize that the widespread corruption affects governing of cities and lowers the citizens engagement, and fight this issue to reach more just and transparent society.

We need to have all government documents and data, including acts, regulations, project plans, consultation reports, and tender information, published and made available through centralized platforms designed for easy access and use by the public. There should be simple and efficient process of making complaint and demanding investigation in case some of the files seems to reveal illegal or corrupt practice.

Civile society must participate in public institution through different partnerships and better involvement of civil organisation. There should be a system to empower citizens to shape movement, institutions and services. Through participatory budgeting, citizens should have the opportunity to decide how public funds are allocated. Petitions should be taken into the account and

provide mandate discussion in the national parliament in order to ensure that citizens can directly influence decision making

To ensure equality and justice, providing free legal assistance to citizens in administrative matters. This initiative will help individuals navigate bureaucratic processes with confidence and fairness, ensuring that their rights are protected.

By implementing these initiatives, we aim to build a government that is not only of the people but also by the people and for the people. Together, we can create a future defined by transparency, inclusivity, and active civic engagement.

Human rights

A democratic society must ensure the protection of individual liberties, human rights, cultural relativism, and the rights of minorities. Freedom of expression and speech must be respected, while keeping in mind that spreading hate speech should not be tolarated.

We acknowledge that respect for human rights cannot be guaranteed without tackling the discrimination of vulnerable groups in society, standing strongly for a self-determined, decent life with full access to social, political, cultural, and economic rights.

The human-rights based approach

- Recognizing and fighting the discrimination and hate speech against all the vulnerable groups inluding women, the LGBTQIA+ community, persons with disabilities, Roma community and other racial minorities, religious minorities, internally displaced people, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and country-specific vulnerable groups.

- Ensuring equal access to participate in political process and join the civil society organisations for marginalised groups.

- Making sure every group's needs are met equally, fulfilling their right for peaceful life, security, dignifid life conditions, decent living wage, health inusrence, right to work etc.

It is crucial that all citizens have equal rights and their lie needs covered despite of their socio-cultural differences and backgrounds. This especially means a right to work, to live freely and securely, to have decent living wage, to have health insurance, to have right on education, to have drinking water and to have other human needs fulfilled. Sad reality is that many of people, especially those coming from vulnerable backgrounds, do not have these rights fulfilled and live well below these standards.

Vulnerable groups include, but are not limited to, minorities, women and non-binary people, LGBTQIA+ and queer people, people with disabilities, Roma community and other racial minorities, migrants, refugees and displaced people, religious minorities, and those from living in unfavourable socio-economic conditions. The reality is that people from these groups and communities do not

have same opportunities and rights as others, and in order to have a just and progressive society we need to redgndnize their needs and fulfil them.

These are just the basic needs that are essential for one's survival but it is also important to take into the account the rights of various groups on freedom of speech and various cultural freedoms. Everyone should have the freedom to express themselves and to practice their culture as long as it does not involve attack on someone else's right or spread of hate and/or misinformation.

LGBTQIA+ Rights

- Providing safety and security for all sexual and gender minorities.
- Equal rights for LGBTQIA+ people regarding marriage, adoption and parenting, as well as with work-related benefits, pension rights and immigration and asylum.
- Determined combating of discrimination and hate crime against LGBTI+ people.
- Legally adapting existing documents and practices regarding transgender people so that system would recognize gender and sex transitions, making the process and burocracy easier for non-binary and transgender people.
- Provide funding, resources, and training for local LGBTQIA+ organizations to strengthen their advocacy efforts, and inviting them more to have a say in the institutional work.
- Partner with municipalities and local communities to establish community centres or safe spaces where LGBTQIA+ individuals can access resources, counselling, and peer support.
- Strengthen collaboration with internation LGBTQIA+ and queer organisations and community in order not only to share experience and widen the network, but also to leverage international platforms to pressure governments in Eastern Europe to uphold human rights commitments.

In Eastern Europe it is especially difficult to lobby for progressive changes due to highly conservative and in many cases authoritarian governments, that proclaim traditional values which are used as an excuse for corruption and intolerance. In the ILGA Europe ranking, Eastern European countries are at the bottom of the list when it comes to tolerance and respect for LGBTQIA + rights. Various Eastern European countries still have a problem with numerous hate crimes against LGBTQIA+ people, some, sadly, resulting in violence and murder. The rights for sexual and gender minorities are limited, while even freedom of expression is called "propaganda" in some of the countries such as Georgia. In 2023, only Montenegro (12th) and Croatia (18th) were in top 20 best rated countries. There are some signs of improvement, such as the introduction of marriages in Estonia and Slovenia, civil unions in some countries, recently Latviia and Montenegro and the ongoing anti-discrimination laws in other countries. Homophobia is decreasing among young people, especially those with liberal and leftist views. The number of organized prides is also growing.

Thus, we believe that the rights for LGBTQIA+ people must be finally reached in all of the countries of Eastern Europe. Sexual and gender minorities must have safe and secure lives without the threat of violence and hate crime. Everyone must have the right to find work that earns them living wage and not to face discrimination because of their identity on the work job, as well as in their private and public lives. Same sex marriages should be recognised by the law, providing LGBTQIA+ people with right to adopted and to have legally recognized unions. Laws and system that concern gender transitions must be updated in order for trans and non-binary people to have easier time dealing with these processes.

Gender equality and women's rights

- Introducing 50%+ quota for women, non- in assemblies on all levels of government, but also including women in all spheres of political system and policy making.
- Legal recognition of all gender identities, and gender expression and sex characteristics.
- Zero tolerance towards gender-based violence. We must have better policies against gender-based violence and better work on fighting the problem of femicide.
- Ensuring equal access to the labour market, opportunities and fair pay for people of all genders. Eradicating unpaid work and care-based work that women often provide for free in the patriarchal environments and societies.
- Eliminating gender pay gap, with heavy fines for companies that do not comply.
- Introducing an obligation for all the companies to implement an equality plan, including gender parity on the high- and middle- level management position.
- Ensuring equal access to social rights for people of all genders.
- Better and free reproductive health care for women of all ages and stages of lives. This includes the right on the abortion.
- Quality education regarding women and gender equality and fighting patriarchal ideas on all levels of educational systems.
- Zero tolerance against sexual harassment and sexual violence, better legal sytem when it comes to fighting sexual based crimes, and more just punishment for those who commit sexual assault. Better care for the victims of sexual assault.

Gender equality is fundamental to a just society. Longstanding patriarchal traditions as well as the economic inequalities, have resulted in the oppressive, exploitative and discriminatory treatment of non-males, often effectively relegating them to second-class status. Eastern Europe is often

cradle of patriarchy and it often doesn't have suitable laws and education that provide neither security nor equality for women and gender minorities. Sustained action, guided by a strong feminist perspective, is needed to overcome this problem. Gender equality is the necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

We believe that the first step in achieving these rights is the proportional representation of people of various gender identities in representative bodies which includes, but is not limited to, assemblies on all state levels. Quotas are, however, not enough as women must be included in every step of making policies so that they are directly expressing their needs and rights. This does not only mean policies that are directly addressing gender equality, but also educational, housing, health problems etc. as all of these are areas that affect everyone, but are often normalised by male standards…

Gender-based violence is ongoing problem and it is not being delt with efficiently in the eastern region, often resulting in physical violence and death of the victim. Many countries have the epidemic of femicides (most notably, Turkey). Even though some of the Eastern European states have ratified Istanbul Convention it is obvious laws are not put into practice. This is why there should be better security for gender minorities. This also includes victims of sexual violence and harassment, another area where law and practice are often lacking. The inquiries into sexual assault should be done thoroughly, with empathy towards the victim, without additional harm to them, and justly.

Women and gender minorities that require it must have right to free and quality reproductive health care. This should be provided to those of all stages and ages of life and includes the right to terminate pregnancy.

The right to work and earn decent, living and equal wage should be provided to all. Workers rights should be adapted to women and gender minorities and should include paid pregnancy leave, days off for period and all other rights specific to gender minorities. Discrimination in any way on work place on the basis of gender is absolutely unacceptable. All companies and institutions should have equality plan, and there should be clear proceeding in cases when this plan is not fulfilled. We are against unpaid care work that often falls down to women, such as child care and care for the sick and elderly. This type of work should be split equality between members of household and/or should be compensated, as it is unfair that women are those who are expected to carry out this work for free in the patriarchal societies.

There should be better education in schools as well as accessible informal education about gender rights, equality and history of gender rights that would provide young people with knowledge and resources about the subject. We believe this is the only way going forward and bettering the society in order to reach equality among all genders in full.

Racial minority and Roma rights

- Strengthen anti-discrimination laws to address systemic racism and protect racial minorities from prejudice. Racial minorities should have all the human rights, full equality and integration in the society.
- Educational institution should do more to fight discrimination and bullying of different racial groups.
- Consultation with civil society groups and organisations that are expertise when it comes to racial minority rights, include people from these communities directly in the policy making instead of talking about them.
- Develop targeted employment programs to improve access to jobs for racial minorities, addressing various barriers and fighting for their work rights.
- Strengthen legislation and enforcement against hate speech, racist propaganda, and far-right extremism targeting minorities.
- Better institution and social services that provide help to racial minorities and that work on integration.
- Ensure meaningful political representation of racial minorities and Roma people in local and national governments.
- Recognize and celebrate cultural diversity as a strength of Eastern European societies.

We recognise that Easter European countries have a systematic problem with racism, especially towards Roma communities. As organisation that values progressive ideas and freedoms, these are inequalities that we strive to get rid of in order to provide safe and fair life to people from all racial background. This is why countries of Eastern Europe must develop anti-discrimination laws that will strongly address racism and protection of racial minorities, especially when it comes to Roma people that are heavily discriminated in the region. These laws must provide equal rights and social security to racial minorities, as well as tackle the question of housing, employment, healthcare, education and prejudices faces by communities.

There should be zero tolerance policy when it comes to various forms of racist discrimination, hate speech and far-right ideas that promote extremism which targets racial minorities. In order to achieve this, institutions concerning these issues, as well as handling integration, should be strengthened and get better funding. There are various civil organisations and groups in the region that already have expertise in developing policies about rights for racial minorities, so we demand for their including in the functioning of these bodies. Additionally, there should be political representation of these minorities in various legal bodies and local and national govemrents. Special emphasis should be put on the process of education where racial minorities should be fully integrated and school curriculum provides education about history and rights of racial minorities.

We strive toward society that provides equality for cultural, racial and national background, so we wish to recognize and cultural diversity of all racial minorities in the region and finally reach diverse and inclusive Eastern Europe.

Children and youth rights

- Creating umbrella laws on the rights of the child in all the countries.
- Appropriate legal assistance to children in administrative and civil procedures.
- Establishing the networks of institutions supporting children, especially in psycho-social support, from every village to big cities.
- Prioritising preventive, rehabilitation and reintegration measures in all the environments for children and families at risk.
- More accessible, independent funds for youth-led projects on European, national and local levels.
- Accessible legal means and advisory for youth to insist on their rights.
- Establishment of youth centres in every municipality, more funding to youth work, both paid and voluntary.
- Recognizing the importance of indicators such as the Youth Progress Index as an important measure of a country's development.
- Accountability of the Catholic Church for the sexual violence of priests against children and for the cover-up of this violence by the hierarchy with mandatory compensation for victims, and the opening of archives.

As an organisation of young people, we recognise the key role of youth and children in society. Youth is not only the future of society but its present too. Often, they are not seen as an active and equal actor in the political, social, cultural, and economic spheres and are excluded from decision-making processes or treated as mere tokens. There is need to empower young people, let them lead and create projects, support youth in decision-making and youth organisations.

In many countries, there is no clear framework for children's rights. Protection of them is also harder due to economical, cultures and administrative barriers, a huge number of non-reporting of cases of rights violations, bad legal procedures and lack of trust in the work of authorities. CDN sees the need of holistic politics to break all of these barriers in order to achieve proper children and youth rights protection.

Migrants' and refugees' rights

- Increased funding for the shelter and integration sector instead of the border guard.
- Guarantee access to basic rights for migrants and refugees, including decent shelter, food, healthcare, education, and legal support.
- Bettering asylum process and advocating for asylum seeking rights.
- Safer migration processes that also take into the account human trafficking danger and problem.
- Foster social and economic inclusion through language courses, job training, and access to education for children and adults. Support cultural exchange initiatives to promote understanding and combat xenophobia.
- Recognize the issue of climate immigration and address is better, pushing for right of climate refugees. While the topic of migration refugee rights in Eastern Europe is different than when we talk about it in Western context, we still want to underline importance of reconditing rights of migrants and refugees and providing them with safe conditions. This is why we advocate for increasing funding for the shelters and integration, and making rights of migrants and refugees more prioritising problem than it is now.

With war in Ukraine and destabilisation of Middle East, Africa and Asia, eastern Europe is also getting influx from refugees in recent years and it is important to provide them with decent living conditions and better social inclusion. We support cultural exchange initiatives and fight for refugee and migrant healthcare, work rights, legal support and shelter. We also have to take the account the growing issue of climate refugees, and to start talking more about the issue while also providing good life conditions to those forced to move their place of life due to global heating and climate crisis.

This all includes fighting against all cases of human trafficking, as migrants and refugees are often victims of these illegal activities. There should be better education about issue and better funding for those institutions and organisations that are trying to stop and prevent human trafficking.

Disabilities rights

- Push for anti-discrimination laws that explicitly protect individuals with disabilities in education, employment, healthcare, and public services. These laws should be in line with progressive global conventions and

regulations, such as UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

- Introduction of care benefits, including social insurance such as employment benefits, for all people caring for a person with a disability, regardless of their age.

- Advocate for and work towards complete accessibility in the settlements that will help people with disabilities to function normally and without any difficulties.

- Bettering the educational system that will help children and young people with any kind of physical or mental disability get the quality education alongside their peers.

- Improve health system so people with disabilities can have adequate and quality health care. All health institutions should be fully accessible and there should be better funding of medical research of disabilities.

The society we advocate for is the one where all people have equal opportunities despite of their abilities, which is why we need to take the rights of people with disabilities into the account. We strive towards states offering much better health care and bigger funding for disability research, so all people have quality treatment, good health insurance, and educated doctors that can provide them specific health needed.

Currently the Eastern European infrastructure is largely lacking when it comes to accessibility, so it is crucial to have settlements that are accessible for all. This especially concerns workplaces and places of education (kindergartens, schools and universities) as right to work and educate is one of the top priorities for everyone. People with disabilities deserve dignified and quality lives that won't be limited or that doesn't differentiate them from people who do not have health problems.

We need to introduce better social and care system that will provide care benefits, work benefits, and social insurance to those who are caring for people with disabilities.

Religious freedom

- Recognizing and fighting the discrimination and hate speech against the religious minorities.
- Abolishing regulations on blasphemy or offending religious feelings in the countries it is on place.
- Religious neutrality of state offices and institutions that are to serve all citizens regardless of their religion or lack thereof with ban on displaying religious symbols in public and administrative buildings.
- Ban on political agitation in places of religious worship.
- Ensuring that religious associations are taxed and not given the exception from the law against discrimination.
- Freedom of belief and religious practice as long as other people are not pressured.

We believe that state should be secular and that no religion should dictate state and laws, ensuring that governmental policies and decisions are not influenced by religious doctrines. There should be guaranteed right that no religion is privileged over others in public institutions or laws.

This also provides protection the rights of minorities and ensures equal access to public services for all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs. We advocate for the rights of minority religious groups, ensuring they have the same freedoms and safety as majority faiths. This prevents discrimination and favouring certain groups based on religion. Religious freedom also enables the development of science, culture and education independently of religious influences.

Religious education on the state level should be done so that children are informed of various different religious and not just the majority religion of the said state. School should promote religious tolerance, but also be separated from church and from sharing any specific religious doctrine.

Every person should have the right to practice their religion and have certain believes, as long as they don't pressure or harm others. No one should be made either by state or another person to practice or not practice the religion. Place of religious worship should not be agitated.

However, religious associations should be taxed accordingly, and they should not be excluded from ban on discrimination.

Cultural policy

Culture is intertwined with every other aspect of life and is fundamentally linked to the overall quality of living. Moreover, we believe that without a developed culture, deeper and broader social change is not possible and hence the culture policy should be more prioritised by progressives in Eastern Europe.

CDN stands for the society with access to culture, with adequate access to information in reliable media, with cultural connections to other nations in Europe and world, and that treats and rewards cultural workers with dignity.

Media & digital policy

- An end to censorship and threats to free media - both online and offline, as well as to digital activism, protecting the data and end of blackouts.
- Media law that ensures that media is not controlled by the economic elite advancing their own interests.
- Stopping the detention and imprisonment of journalists, and stronger sanctions against the countries attacking free media.
- Promotion of free software and open source-based platforms, especially by public institutions.
- Stronger protection of journalists' sources and whistle-blowers.
- Strong laws to protest the privacy online both by governments and by companies.
- Net neutrality, which implies treating all Internet communications equally.
- Implementing the law to be forgotten.
- Strong laws against online harassment to protect the victims of revenge pornography, doxxing, etc.
- Affirmative action programs that foster the active participation of women and other disadvantaged genders in the digital sphere.
- Better laws dealing with usage and regulation of AI technologies, be it development or usage.
- Sanctioning the production and usage of AI so it doesn't further environment considering it's high energy consumption.

A free, diverse and critical media landscape is crucial to a well-functioning democracy, allowing citizens to express their views, gain information, and engage in political deliberation. We believe that only a media that is not controlled by a few big enterprises and political actors can fulfil its role in holding governments accountable. We believe in the power of digital activism too. For the internet to remain a space where society can meet and deliberate, we must ensure that it is free from mass surveillance both by government and commercial entities, and the fake news and disinformation is fought.

Media shouldn't be cancelled in any situation that doesn't promote hate or violence against certain group of people. We believe in people's right be informed as critical thinking, accessibility to information and knowledge are

some of the keys of shaping citizens when it comes to political thinking and advancing democracy.

Journalists should be protected no matter what is the dominant politics of the country. Their safety should be insured in all circumstances, providing them in just environment where they can preform their job. Attack against journalists should be prosecuted by the international bodies. We also advocate for better rights of whistle-blowers which will ensure their protection and wellbeing.

Policies regarding AI Technology

- Advocate for AI systems to be developed and used in ways that prioritize human rights, social equity, and democratic values, in completely transparent and ethical ways.
- Expanding regulations and legal frames when it comes to usage and development of AI so it is focused on human wellbeing and protection.
- Oppose energy-intensive AI systems that contribute to carbon emissions, and promote development of low-energy and renewable alternatives. Switch to optimised usage of AI that doesn't overwhelm energy resources
- Safeguard jobs by regulating AI-driven automation, enforce worker's rights and ensuring fair labour practices.
- Advocate for stronger data protection laws to make sure that citizens' privacy is always protected. We must prevent exploitation and misuse of personal data by corporations or governments.
- Support stricter regulations for tech giants to prevent monopolistic practices and ensure fair competition.
- Position Eastern Europe as a hub for ethical and green AI by encouraging international collaboration and protecting local interests at the same time.
- Promote usage of AI technologies that improves the rights of people, helps youth activists, aid education and helps institutional work, while keeping the human benefit and data protection the priority at all times.

We understand that AI technologies are the invention that is use on every day basis and that they help the quality of life in many ways. However, as AI is ever-growing and new field in the sphere of digital technologies, legal regulations are not as developed as they should be in order to keep human rights and democratisation of society as the key point. We already know that AI is used in many surveillance technologies being pioneered in Eastern European countries, and that AI based algorithms on social media and heavily influencing political content being presented to it's users. Majority of social media that is used around the world, as well as in Eastern Europe, is being developed by Chinese companies that do not priorities data protection and by American tech moguls that mostly support conservative and oligarchic ideas. This is why we have to be very careful when it comes to future of AI, and why CDN finds that we should have better policies about its development and usage.

These policies must be based around bettering society and having human safety and wellbeing at its core. We want AI that will help society's development, education and labour, but not in the way that it will affect labour rights, youth activism, human safety, data protection and quality of education.

As we keep green ideals in the core of our organisation, we must at all times keep in mind AI's energy consumption and its heavy influence on the environment. This is why we must strive towards using more energy efficient AI technologies that are based on renewable resources and do not, in any way, harm the environment or affect climate changes.

Arts & Culture Policy

- Everyone should have the right on their cultural and artistic expression.
- Allocating at least one percent of the state budget to culture.
- Affordable cultural institution tickets, with programmes of free admission to all state museums.
- Making reading material available in electronic form by schools and libraries, as well as popularising available sources of digitalised culture and art.
- Increasing access to culture through its digitisation, i.e. digitisation of museum and library collections, audiovisual materials and documentation of material heritage monuments.
- Establishing general pan-European standards concerning working conditions, pay and employment in the culture institutions of the same type, which must be observed in all institutions regardless of the place of operation and organiser.
- Establishing the European regulation on the artist profession and support for creators and artists in the form of grants, scholarships, funds for competitions.
- Increasing the capacity of institutions that deal with the protection of cultural heritage that has been neglected, increasingly privatized or exposed to decay.

Culture is a public good, that should be accessible to all, and in various ways. Moreover, culture is an integral part of a democratic society. We recognize that freedom of art should be a key determinant of the level of democracy in a given country and that cultural policy should be a priority of both national and local governments and other political organizations like ours.

The artists and cultural workers deserves the recognition of their great social role. We need to end the systematic underfinancing by creating fair system of public funding and regulating the working condition in the culture and arts sector that is planned and implemented in the cooperation with artists.

Art, culture and cultural practices should not be discriminated, censored and banned, and every person should have the right of the cultural and artistic

expression according to their wishes as long as no hateful or harmful message is being spread.

The need for intercultural dialogue

- Facts and responsibilities before dialogue. Internal dialogue and recognition of the responsibilities of the states for previous faults as the prerequisite for institutional dialogue.
- Dialogue through institutions, not through media. The intercultural dialogue should be taken seriously and happen in the state institutions and civil society, not just as the media statements that are not changing anything.
- Transparency, clear legal basis and inclusion of the civic society in the institutional dialogue.
- Bigger focus on the intercultural education.
- The rejection of politics of division and politics that seek to use nationalistic or any other kind of exclusionary rhetoric at the expense of minorities and vulnerable groups.
- An end to the discrimination of groups that do not conform to national customs shared by the majority.
- No space in the public discourse and institutions for rhetoric and policies that aim at inciting hatred.

We believe that intercultural dialogue not only deepens the understanding of different perspectives and practices, but is the basis for the functioning of peaceful, inclusive and democratic societies. We consider it necessary to conduct a permanent intercultural dialogue on a larger scale to a mutual understanding of societies, to identify common and specific problems, mutual aspirations and grievances, and to learn about historical and cultural similarities

An inclusive society and long-term sustainable prosperity can only be achieved with a defeat of exclusionary ideologies such as fascism or populism that for years are only leading European countries to insecurity, divisions and exclusion of the most threatened groups. These political agendas further weaken the disenfranchised and strengthen the powerful. We believe solidarity to be a foundation on which all progress is built. We stand for cooperation and mutual collaboration as solutions to the split societies that exclusionary ideologies create.

Decolonisation

Eastern Europe was the subject of colonization by various empires: Russia, United Kingdom, Austria, Ottoman Empire, Germany and Sweden. Moreover, the Eastern European countries as Hungary, Poland or Serbia were colonizers themselves towards their neighbours. There is still ongoing neo-colonial aspect

where Europe, and by that also Eastern Europe, is under direct and indirect attack of Russia, China, USA, and other global forces that use hard and soft powers alike.

We believe that the suppressive systems imposed by colonial powers in all the aspects – economical, social, cultural, political – need to be dismantled. For that to happen, it is crucial to rise awareness of our colonial past and actively initiate and participate in the process of decolonization. Unification of Europe and development of it's independence is also key point to resist new threats and attacks on states and security of the continent.

Recognizing Eastern Europe as post-colonial space

- Introducing colonial past of Eastern Europe as a part of school curriculum, as well as educating citizens how the colonisation continues to shape daily life.
- Completely sever ties with actors that are still furthering the colonisation process, (see: Fighting Russian imperialism chapter).
- Calling to decolonise themselves and demanding a change in historical education from countries that do not admit their colonial past (as, eg., Austria, Hungary, Turkey).
- Recognition of past war crimes as the first step of the peacebuilding process (as, eg. Srebrenica genocide and Armenian genocide).

Most of the countries in Eastern Europe were in their history occupied colonial empires or ruled by their puppet government. This heritage in our countries has resulted in a lack of experience of democracy and a low level of social commitment and political culture.

The democratisation and modernisation processes in Eastern Europe is still significantly sabotaged by Russia, the oligarchs and politicians it supported, the disinformation and destabilization campaign, and the wars it started in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. The lack of its common recognition as struggle against colonial empire led to the slow and inadequate reaction of international community for the Russian aggressions in these countries.

One of the first steps of going forwards also must be recognition of state's own colonial past and war crimes, calling them by their name, and leading peace processes. Colonisation is very complex subject and it must be realised that country can be both victim of it and aggressor (as in case of Serbia, which was occupied by Ottoman empire, but then in 90s was the aggressor during the wars, and then the subject of the NATO attack). In order to embrace the complexity we must face with it and start working on reconciliation.

Moreover, the West's inability to take proper account of Eastern European historical experiences and taking responsibility by former colonizers leads to existing inequalities between countries, discrimination against Eastern Europeans (especially those outside the EU), stereotyping and Euro-Orientalism, and exploitation of our countries.

Thus, we believe that Eastern Europe's recognition as a post-colonial space is necessary both for modernization and democratic processes in our countries, and for the equality in international relations in Europe and the world.

The process of decolonization

- Getting rid of signs of colonial powers in terms of language, school curriculum, street names, monuments, traditions, literature, preceded by a research and reflections of colonizers impact and what stands behind the reason for a need for a replacement.

- Expose the vast influence culture holds in perpetuating colonial thought, with promoting and prioritising voices of those who have suffered under systems of colonisation.

- Initiation of serious, fact-based debate on the monetary and symbolic reparations from former colonial states and return of stolen artefacts currently exhibited and kept in Western & Northern European museums.

- Promoting active decolonization in the international organisations, by ensure a platform for members who come from colonised areas, increasing community building through mobilising youth from diverse background or promoting engaging informational material created by those from colonised areas

We believe that the process of decolonization needs to happen in all the captured spheres of public life, as culture, economics, education or politics. Decolonisation process needs to happen both in the former colony that regains its independence, self-identity and cultural autonomy, and in former colonizer that must renounce all encroachments on the territory that may once have belonged to it territorially, industrially, or even culturally. The process needs to be agreed upon by both parties.

Finally, the decolonization needs to happen also in the international organisations and movements that should pay more attention to the problems and aspirations of regions as Eastern Europe, instead of taking the reality of Western and Northern Europe as the premise of any political discussion and focusing firstly on its problems and programs created for it.

Social rights

Housing

We believe that housing, as well as free education or healthcare, is the basic human rights. It needs to be affordable, accessible and adequate. We need solutions for ensuring that this rights becomes reality for all, solutions for building and renovating existing houses so they are adequate, accessible and affordable, as well as to eliminate homelessness, energy poverty and upgrade informal settlements.

Housing as a right

- Recognition of the right to adequate housing in constitutions, including right to choose one's residence, to determine where to live and to freedom of movement, and protection against forced evictions.
- Increasing public investment in affordable housing, including communal housing and social apartments, with increased of publicly owned housing fund for a long-term, secure rent.
- Long-term elimination of homelessness by systematic elimination of the risk of homelessness, programmes of exit from homelessness, systems of supported housing and total ban on evictions without providing other accommodation.
- Programmes of transformation of informal settlements into liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods (with electrification, improved access, waste management etc.) that are inclusive, participatory and data-driven.
- Encouraging private investment and public-private partnership for building housing in compliance with spatial development plans and construction regulations, e.g. by requiring that at least 10% of the premises be transferred to municipal resources.
- Tying the process of decentralisation with the housing, so developing more housing places in the under-populated settlements and not only building in the capitals which are already overpopulated.
- Stopping investment urbanism that harms living space and does not help average citizen but deepens the class gap eg. by strengthening the control institutions, increasing citizens' participation in creation of spatial

development plans, or regulations that prevent irresponsible housing projects.

- Transparent and clear criteria for obtaining communal and social housing, with emphasis on youth, vulnerable groups and deficient occupations (eg. teachers or nurses).
- Support for housing cooperatives by e.g. rent subsidies, transfer of public land or unused spatial resources.
- Building and renovating dormitories (see: Higher education).
- Better restrictions against rent rises.
- Regulating real estate investments, eg. by introducing property tax on owning a third and subsequent flats (see: Taxation).
- Limits on short-term tourist rentals if decided by municipalities.
- European social energy renovation programme available for all, with focus on the vulnerable groups.
- Legislation to ensure that no vulnerable households is cut off from utilities because it cannot afford them.

Housing is one of the core human rights and not a luxury. As such, citizens should be able to afford themselves decent living space that will not put them in the danger of ending up on the street. This needs to be done by reorganising housing policies and bettering the urbanism plans that will develop more affordable and more sustainable cities and settlments for all people.

Young people in Eastern Europe deal with rising rents, especially in big cities, and old and unmaintained housing. Hence, public funding for building and renovating housing needs to be increased. We believe that in the times of housing shortage, there is a need for building houses also by private investors, however, they need to be built after consultations with citizens, and aiming to solving housing problems, not serving primarily as a capital investment.

The renters need to be protected from exploitation! The rent should be fixed and predictable, the signed contract should be prepared in a legible and clear manner, and the rights of tenants should be protected by law. We support introduction of the rent gap which will help spiralling of the prices which is currently happening in Eastern European region. Searching for a rental apartment should not be a long, stressful process. Moreover, the homes should be built with good access to infrastructure, green areas, public transport and close to public services.

We believe that the right to decent housing should be guaranteed by state and European institutions, and protected by law. Hence, in addition to change of general framework of housing policy, there is need to have concrete set of policies against housing crisis and exploitation of renters.

The issue related to housing is energy poverty: houses need to be warm in winter and cool in summer. We need large-scale social energy renovation and retrofitting programme to combat energy poverty.

Education

Education is one of the most important means enabling young citizens to stand up for their rights and fully contribute to democracy. We believe the current educational system must be fundamentally reformed enabling the direct and equal participation of students in the learning process. Education is for progress, sustainability, diversity, and prosperity. The educational reform is one of the most important issues, hence it must not be a subject to interest of particular political options, but take into account the diverse views and opinions of all relevant stakeholders.

Modern pan-European education

- Free education, especially for underprivileged people.
- Increasing the number of scholarships for students. At the EU level, the number of scholarships for non-EU citizens needs to be increased.
- Process of changing the curricula led on the European level so that they are not a burden for either students or teachers, providing common European framework, with space for national and regional differences, and acknowledging the gender imbalance in current curriculum, as well as European guidance on modern teaching methods.
- Common European level guidelines on the financing of education: investment in education on at least 4,7% of GDP, and teachers' salary not lower than the national average.
- Appointing European, national and municipal Student Rights Ombudsmen, with the possibility for the school ombudsmen to also be appointed.
- The support for and recognition of non-institutional and alternative forms of education.

Equal access to high-quality education across the whole Europe is essential to reducing social inequalities, reducing youth emigration and unemployment, and ensuring their future economic independence. It is also necessary for the intercultural exchange and dialogue. Thus, we think that there is need for some pan-European guidelines for education, while ensuring decentralization of education curricula.

We highlight the value and importance of non-formal education as an inclusive alternative to current institutional forms of education and as a major provider of skills to foster participation in democracy.

Modern Education

- Increasing the comfort of work for teachers (and the comfort of learning for students) by reducing the size of classes and groups.
- Better and free access for students and teachers to platforms with materials and digital library resources.
- Improving the situation of teachers, among others by indexation of the salaries of education employees by the percentage of inflation, providing the necessary funds for the purchase of teaching, educational and artistic materials for teachers in educational institutions, and co-financing courses, training and postgraduate studies for teachers.
- Free textbooks for all the students.
- Financing the modernization of schools and kindergartens, and technological reform of educational institutions – e.g. financing of projectors, tablets for teachers, and computers for students.
- Accessibility of schools and education for people with disabilities, both in terms of curriculum and space.
- Sexual education that is queer and inclusive, with a program consulted by educators, psychologists and sexologists.
- Climate education, with a focus on biodiversity and animal protection and rights within biology, geography, chemistry and physics.
- Changing the assessment rules to descriptive assessment, can emphasize the individuality of students.
- Real psychological support for students.
- Guaranteeing places in schools for non-governmental organizations, and providing more funds for youth-led initiatives and cultural events.

The long-term education strategy should be focused on raising the quality of the general level of education for all citizens, not adapting them to the market's needs. Education should be in pairs with the tendencies and challenges of society and ensure the functional literacy of youth by introducing modern curricula elements and approaches in teaching. We believe in the power of non-formal education methods that are not implemented in our education systems. We believe it should be available to all, with support systems for needed students and decent working and salary conditions for teachers.

We recognize the need to change the system of formal education to one that is more suited to the modern world. We also support more close cooperation of schools with civil society. NGOs' activities cannot replace the state school system, but it could be symbiotic.

Higher education

- Greater investment in science and higher education in all science fields, without neglecting the social and humanistic science.
- Creating better conditions for connection of science and higher education, as application of scientific developments in teaching, more research-based curricula and research internships for students.
- Better recognition of degrees between the countries, especially recognition of university qualifications from other countries by EU.
- European education voucher to allow people to study abroad, including fees, travels, accommodation, and other necessities as childcare.
- Higher education accessible for all motivated to study, regardless of the financial possibilities and life circumstances.
- Increasing the capacities of dormitories and ensuring dignity of living conditions (eg. uncrowded, preferably one-person rooms, regularly renovated).
- Study plans adjustments for students that are working or are parents.
- Increase in scholarships for the best students and doctoral scholarships.
- Increase in funding for research and development, with full transparency of grant systems.

Higher education is a basis for the development. It needs to be fair, accessible and modern. Universities should educate their graduates to be fully ready to take up employment or continue their academic career after completing their studies.

High quality research and development should be stimulated. People who decide to pursue a scientific career should enjoy good working conditions, earnings and prestige. Young scientists should gain academic independence more quickly, and universities should attract them and provide good working conditions, for example by offering post-docs.

Healthcare

Efficient health care requires increased funding, well-equipped hospitals and well-paid doctors and nurses. Prevention and diagnostics should be subsidized. Mental and reproductive health should be treated as important as physical health. At the same time, we believe that only a holistic approach to healthcare, in which we take into account the impact of other public policies on our well-being, can give us a chance to build an efficiently functioning system.

Health Policy For All

- Free, accessible and adequate healthcare guaranteed by the state.
- 8% of GDP for the healthcare in all the countries by 2030.
- Better reproductive healthcare, such as access to menstrual products and increased access to contraception - including emergency contraception, providing perinatal anesthesia.
- Maximum 21 days to see a specialist, maximum 2 hours in the Emergency Department, creation or restoration of night and holiday shifts at primary healthcare facilities.
- Reduce medicaments prices, especially for vulnerable people; good medicines policy to become independent from supplies from outside Europe.
- Mandatory HPV vaccines and free STDs testing.
- Better procedures for pandemic response, as well as disaster response, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Effective strategies against addictions, with more accessible and affordable care.

CDN believes that free, accessible and adequate healthcare is one of the most important tasks of a state. Therefore, prioritizing healthcare and increasing spending on it is imperative. We need faster access to specialists and ERs, we need better access to mental and reproductive health. Improving the conditions of treatment and health care must also include meals in hospitals, reducing the prices of prescription drugs, and increasing access to contraception.

We are aware that especially vulnerable groups encounter obstacles in healthcare: there are big differences in quality of health services between countries, between urban and rural areas, there are problems with healthcare for migrant workers.

Mental Health

- Universal and public healthcare should recognize mental health as equally important to physical health.
- Mental health care included in health insurance: free, comprehensive access to specialists, possibility of obtaining sick leave, etc. This also includes free medication for mental health for those that require it.
- Mainstream mental health in policy initiatives, especially in housing, work and education policy.
- Evidence-based and patient-first mental healthcare.
- Establishing European standards and best practices for diagnosing and treating mental illness.
- Involvement of people with experience of mental health issues in shaping the mental health policies.
- Spread awareness to reduce the stigma, particularly among vulnerable groups.
- Providing specialist care to individuals from vulnerable groups, acknowledging their unique needs.
- Education on mental health literacy starting from primary schools.
- Usage of more advanced and recent techniques and medication when it comes to treating mental illnesses.

Mental health needs to be available and affordable. Unfortunately, this is not the reality in Eastern Europe: mental healthcare is not included in state health insurance, there are no preventive measures and there is no possibility to take mental health days off. The costs of psychotherapy are a burden to those in need, while public institution, if they offer help, it is usually not adequate. Approach to mental health is usually outdates, and medication are not on line with global trends in pharmacist when it comes to treating meatal health issues and disorders. Moreover, stigma on seeking mental health is still a problem that needs to be removed through proper education and legislation.

Mental health is affected by many factors related to policies, such as the housing crisis or poor working conditions. Hence, we consider it necessary to take a holistic view on mental health, mainstreaming it in every policy area. This area of health care is especially important to young people, so we must fight more for establishing good and quality practices.

Drug policy

- Decriminalization of the use of small amounts of drugs and other psychoactive substances
- Harm-reduction approach with system of medical and psychological assistance for addicts with, among others, overdose prevention and reversal system programmes, supporting opioid agonist therapy and needle and syringe programmes.
- Legalization of recreational and medical marijuana, with allowing the cultivation of up to four cannabis plants per household for personal use, legalization of the production of medical and recreational marijuana for retail use with possible THC content threshold of 15%.

Current drug policies in Eastern Europe – though more or less restrictive – are based on repression and are not delivering the expected results. CDN believes that decriminalization of drugs allows the focus to be on public health, rehabilitation and prevention. It has benefits such as market control, reduced crime related to illegal trade and better access to health care. Decisions on drug policy should be based on scientific evidence and analysis of social impacts, which indicate a reduction in health harm and improved safety of users.

Spatial Policy & Planning

Across Eastern Europe, we see that public spaces are "public" in name only. Municipal decision makers often put short term profits over the sustainability and long-term benefits. Their decisions often increase social exclusion and stratification, eg. by decisions on financing and building schools that contributes to unequal access to education. This needs to be changed. Municipal authorities, as well as urbanism and development departments, need to create projects benefitting all.

Truly Public Infrastructure

- Making municipalities more-pedestrian friendly, with prioritising walking and cycling to other means of transport, prioritising creation of safe and passable crossings, wide sidewalks etc.
- Public transportation to be a reliable, accessible, fast and cheap or free option of transport for all citizens.
- Public bathrooms to be accessible and inclusive.
- Smashing the unnecessary fences.
- Limiting advertising in public spaces.
- Solutions for people with lower mobility as, among others, elevators, suitable ramps, benches and resting areas, avoiding inconsistent patterns or non-inclusive fonts. Vulnerable groups, as people with disabilities,

needs to be consulted in the decision-making process on the planning issues.

- Green and friendly local government offices: digitalization of offices, elimination of excess paper waste, elimination of plastic items in offices and public institutions, offices and public buildings equipped with photovoltaic panels.

Public spaces in Eastern Europe are often inaccessible or unsafe for many vulnerable groups, and their car-centric infrastructure is creating unhealthy and unecological environments. It is also usually in bad shape, unhygienic, and unreliable, making the everyday lives of all people harder and inconvenient. While most of the cities originally were good for walking, their development lead to settlements which are harder to navigate through, and majority of them is not cycling friendly.

This needs to change! Cities need to benefit all the citizens, not only the privileged ones. New projects and improving the existing infrastructure should be based on the intersectional perspective of social, cultural and environmental factors. Public spaces need to be truly public: oriented towards need of locals, safe and accessible.

Socially Just and Green Cities

- Stopping of prioritising the private transportation, for example by banning cars from city centres, creating woonerfs or arrowing streets in city centres. Investing more in better and more sustainable public transport in return.

- Implementing a revitalization policy for underdeveloped cities and districts that takes the environmental factors into account and implements measures preventing gentrification by pursuing an active and appropriate housing policy.

- Waste management systems in cities that are ecological and with clear principles.

- Creating green and blue areas (see: Urban ecosystems).

- Narrowing streets and reducing the number of parking spaces in city centres.

Most of the population lives in cities. Cities getting bigger due to influx of people face the problems of more pollution and lack of public infrastructure. Urban/suburban dichotomy is also the resulting challenge that needs to be solved by better planning, as well as advanced infrastructure and accessible public transport.

CDN demands that municipal decision makers prioritize human oriented development in cities, so the infrastructure, public services, local initiatives are truly public, just and green.

Socially Just and Green Rural and Remote Areas

- Bus connections or "on request" bus services in every village with the municipal office and the town with the railway station.
- Ensuring an adequate amount of trees in the fields, free access to forests.
- Financing local (or city branches) cultural institutions, such as libraries or cultural centres and youth centres.
- Good municipal services, such as adequately frequent garbage collection and adequate street lighting.

Urbanization rate is still lower in Eastern Europe than in other parts of the continent. However, rural areas across Eastern Europe are neglected and underdeveloped, migration of youth to the capitals and big cities. Administrative, political and economic centralization is the challenge for most of the Eastern European countries, contributing to all of this. For example, in many areas public transport is limited, former small stations and side railway lines have been closed, and bus lines have been privatized, making them available only on the most profitable routes. The rural areas need to be develop more sustainable.

Note: This section does not apply to agriculture, as most people in rural areas are not employed in this sector. Programme for Farming is in separate section.

Inclusion

We believe that state should enable all inhabitants to lead dignified lives. In order to achieve this social security should not only ensure survival but enable people to be included, to actively participate in the cultural and social life of their communities. Social solidarity expressed in practice through state-guaranteed social security is one of the strongest cohesive forces in any society, being an important means for achieving prosperity for all, equality and meaningful lives.

Inclusive Governance and Social Rights

- The prohibition of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, orientation, belief, disability, self-identity, age etc. that ensures the equal access for all the social rights defined in this chapter as housing, education and healthcare; equal access to employment and promotion, to

culture goods, to equal pay for work of equal value, and to occupy positions, perform functions and receive public dignities.

- Implementation of European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by every country, with guarantee for usage of minority languages in areas where accepting them as official languages is reasonable.

- Providing opportunities and funding for the activities and cultural autonomy of ethnic and language minorities.

- Not imposing by state any defining characteristics, such as exclusionary cultural norms, as the ones to be followed by citizens.

As a Green organisation encompassing a geographically and ethnically diverse region, cultural rights and non-discrimination is a vital part of our world-view. Cultural diversity is of fundamental value to us. Protection of diversity fosters inclusion and equal participation of every person in state affairs, public and everyday life, and guarantees that everyone has equal opportunities for personal and social fulfilment. Inclusion and openness help create a more welcoming society, where a variety of ideas, efforts and perspectives may thrive.

We believe that every community has the right to use their own language and to preserve their traditions as long as they do not violate the rights of others.

Therefore, we stand for social sensitivity, peaceful co-existence, preservation of local languages and cultural heritage and traditions where their compatible with non-violence and inclusion of vulnerable groups. We condemn any discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, belief, self-identity etc.

Youth Policy

- Transforming abandoned and unused spaces into social spaces, especially for young people.

- Restoring, increasing or creating public housing funds, with systemic focus on young people.

- Facilitations for young people on the labour market, among others, tax relief for students and under 26 years of age, ban on free and below-the-minimum-wage internships.

- Funding of amateur sport clubs and activities instead of professional clubs, investing in renovation and building of sports courts and halls to be used by youth and amateurs.

- Broader programmes of support, education and cooperation with youth workers, in particular through full implementation of recommendations of the Council of Europe (CM/Rec(2017)4) on youth work in all countries.

Throughout whole Eastern Europe young people meet challenges with inaccessible public services, job insecurity or unemployment and lack of economic

independence. This all often leads to emigration, or other problems with starting the adult life: for example, the average age when young people start independent life is bigger in Eastern Europe than in Western.

It is necessary to implement systemic measures that would guarantee a stimulating environment for youth's and have a chance to develop in Eastern Europe, as our peers in the West have. Moreover, we think it is crucial to fund, empower and underline the importance youth workers, both paid and volunteers. CDN is trying to set the example of empowering and treating with dignity youth workers that are within our structures.

Climate and Environment

Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation

Decisive action to counteract climate change should be taken immediately. The global scientific consensus has laid out very clear warnings that this is non-negotiable. As an issue that will have irreversible and tragic effects on all of humankind, this is something we understand as urgent and a priority. To properly fight the acceleration of climate change, climate action should be taken at all levels, from the personal to the global.

At the same time, we need to acknowledge the current situation and take efforts to adapt our communities to the effect of climate change. We believe it up to us to act today to prevent the worst effects of climate change.

Reducing Emissions Now

- Creating comprehensive plans to transition to 100% renewable energy that is produced and controlled locally and affordable to everyone in all the countries.
- Setting binding deadlines for phasing out fossil fuels.
    - Coal: Complete phase-out by 2030.
    - Natural gas: End of use by 2035.
    - Oil: Phase-out by 2040
- Introduction of CO_2 emission charges and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies
- Accountability of biggest polluters – both companies and countries – for their contribution to climate change and care for its victims.
- No plans for new fossil fuel extraction or burning to be made or approved.
- Encouraging the divestment from fossil fuel industry.
- Supporting the energy transition of households

Reducing emissions is the first necessary step that the world must take to protect itself from the worst effects of climate catastrophe. It needs to be do now!

At the same time, reducing emissions is not enough and cannot be done without just transition of whole society. We need to improve energy efficiency, starting the transition to renewable energy sources, and decarbonizing the industry, transport and agriculture. The programme for the holistic transition of these sectors is presented in separate sections.

Adaptation to Climate Change

- Promotion of green-blue infrastructure: we support the development of infrastructure that integrates natural elements, such as parks, rain gardens and water retention systems, to increase the resilience of cities to the effects of climate change.

- Implementation of city adaptation plans and other strategic documents: we encourage cities to develop and implement adaptation plans that take into account local conditions and the needs of communities, in order to effectively counteract negative climate effects.

- Education and social awareness: we emphasise and promote the importance of ecological education, aimed at increasing citizens' awareness of the need to adapt to climate change and promoting pro-ecological attitudes.

- Supporting the most vulnerable communities: ensuring protection for groups most affected by the effects of climate change, including the elderly and residents of rural areas.

- Strengthening transport infrastructure: building roads, bridges and railways resistant to extreme weather events.

- Development of warning and response systems for natural disasters: improving technologies for monitoring and early warning of floods, storms and heat waves.

- Integration of climate policies with other sectors: we aim to integrate climate change adaptation into different policy areas, such as transport, energy and agriculture, to ensure coherence of environmental protection actions.

- Integration of international climate policies: since we are all responsible for climate change, we should all also take action to combat it. Climate policy should be an international right and obligation, implemented by all countries.

- International cooperation: providing technical and financial assistance to developing countries to build resilience to climate change.

Eastern Europe is already facing and will face to a greater extent the effects of climate change such as weather extremes, biodiversity loss or food insecurity. While we need to reduce emissions, adapting to climate change is

also a key challenge for Eastern European countries. Thus, we place great emphasis on adaptation to climate change, recognizing it as a key element of the ecological strategy.

Just Transition

CDN takes ecology and environmental justice as guiding principles in our world view and political ideology. Out of all species on Earth, humans are the only ones drastically using and subduing nature to suit their own needs. Pollution, the altering of habitats, extinction of species, climate change, active hostilities, et cetera affect all living organisms.

We consider the healthy environment, and stable ecosystems are a prerequisite for a healthy society. At this moment many are living beyond the capacities of this planet and have little awareness of the repercussions thereof. We need to start acting responsibly and humbly, transiting to a society based on the principles of sustainability and respect of nature's capacities, limiting our own harmful impact.

Farming

- Subsidize productivity growth in agriculture that will not have bad effects on the environment, with restrictive use of fertilizers.
- Transition to plant-based food system.
- Financial support for organic farming and plant products.
- Exploring the possibility of adapting the agriculture for climate change by switching crops and relocating crop production.
- Regulation of the monopolies in food production, support for organic farming, promotion of local products.
- Development of vertical farms and support for other modern solutions..
- Adequate, easy to understand information about the production, origin, content and health effects of the food products we consume.
- Ban on the use of additives and other substances that harm living organisms, soil and water.

Food security must be one of the primary concerns and aims of society. Access to quality food should be unconditionally guaranteed as an intrinsic right for all living beings. Consumers should be incentivised to change their habits, prioritising a low carbon diet by consuming local and organic food. We oppose any monopolisation in food production and seed. Food production should be done with great care for their impact on human health, the environment and other living beings and based on principles of sustainability.

Thus, we believe that we need to change our agriculture policy – both of national level and Common Agriculture Policy - to change the general structure

of farming in Europe, giving priority to ecological farming, restoring biodiversity and fostering animal welfare.

Energy Transition, Efficiency & Independence

- Climate neutral Eastern Europe powered by clean, renewal energy by 2040: a ban on private coal burning by 2030, and a complete phase-out of fossil fuels by 2035.
- Investing in renewal energy sources as the basis for energy generation in Europe, with maintaining the nuclear energy as a supplement as long as necessary.
- Immediate ban on energy import of energy and fuels from aggressor and authoritarian countries.
- High subsidies for thermal modernisation for people with the lowest incomes and increased funding for replacing furnaces with heat pumps and connection to district heating.
- European grid integration.
- Mandatory photovoltaics on new buildings - especially public ones.
- Support for the post-mining areas and communities, especially by:
    - creation of Special Economic Zones in post-mining regions and those most affected by the transformation,
    - expanding the EU Just Transition Fund (including extensions to non-EU countries),
    - transferring funds to local governments for the development of post-mining areas, adapting infrastructure to the new needs of the community,
    - allocation of funds for the retraining of former miners and other professions affected by the transformation.

CDN believes in the climate neutral, energy independent Europe. Moving away from coal is obvious and we believe that we should eliminate coal from our energy mix by 2035 at the latest. Energy transition should be the priority of Eastern European governments.

The energy transition is the basis for the holistic just transition of the whole Eastern Europe. It is necessary to support the post-mining areas, to create new jobs in sectors related to renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and environmental protection. Ensuring decent working conditions and employee safety is crucial, due to the introduction of new technologies and processes related to energy transformation.

Mobility

- Increasing investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure development of a network of bicycle routes, including long-distance routes between cities and safe paths in cities.
- Prioritizing and investing in the development and expansion of the railway network throughout Eastern Europe.
- Integration of national rail networks - building a well-functioning international rail network connecting European countries.
- Development of public transport in rural areas to reduce car dependence.
- Ensuring equal access to public transport for all social groups, including the elderly and disabled.
- Affordable ticket prices in public transport.
- Increasing the number of speed cameras and section speed measurements.
- Reducing the number of parking spaces in city centers and gradually excluding city centers from car traffic.
- Introduction of road user fees for combustion vehicles and low emission zones in cities.
- Creating transport-free zones in city centres.
- Phase-out of commercial flights, especially domestic ones, for trips when there is an opportunity of more environmental means of transport in a reasonable time.
- Investing in research into hydrogen, next-generation biofuels and other low- and zero-emission technologies in the transport sector.
- Reducing emissions from maritime transport through EU regulations, such as the mandatory use of alternative fuels (e.g. LNG) and better route management.

CDN believes that mobility is crucial for just transition. Transport represents almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emission; the inadequate transport policy contributes also in much extent to the air pollution problem in several Eastern European cities. While road transport accounts for the majority of transport emissions, emissions from maritime and aviation continue to rise.

Mobility should focus on sustainable transport, reducing emissions from the transport sector and improving the quality of life of European citizens through the development of clean and accessible transport systems. We believe that mobility should be clean, accessible, safe and based on the principles of social justice. CDN will commit to this, encouraging the sustainable modes of travel for its events.

Waste Management

- Waste management hierarchy: promoting the "5R" model - refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle, rot.
- Reducing waste at source: supporting actions to reduce waste production, e.g. by promoting reusable packaging and products with a longer lifespan.
- Ban on single-use plastic products: introducing restrictions on the production and sale of single-use plastic products, such as cutlery, straws or cups.
- Development of a circular economy (CE): supporting systems in which materials and raw materials are reused instead of ending up in landfills.
- Mandatory waste recycling: implementing more stringent regulations on segregation and recycling, including the recycling of rare and valuable materials.
- Expanding recycling infrastructure: investing in modern waste treatment plants that enable more efficient recycling of materials.
- Deposit system: introducing a mandatory deposit system for plastic bottles, glass and cans to increase their return and recycling rates.
- The "polluter pays" principle: polluters must pay for the pollution they cause. Applying this principle provides an incentive to avoid

environmental damage at source and makes it possible to hold polluters (producers) accountable.

- Minimizing food waste: implementing regulations and educational programs aimed at reducing food waste at every stage of the supply chain.
- Prohibition of waste exports: banning the export of waste, especially plastic, to developing countries that do not have the appropriate infrastructure to process it.
- Promoting composting: developing bio-waste collection systems and supporting composting in homes and communities.
- Producing energy from waste: promoting the safe use of residual waste for energy production, while limiting the incineration of materials that can be recycled.
- Environmental education: organizing campaigns to raise awareness among citizens about proper waste separation and reduction.
- Support for innovation in waste processing: investing in research on new technologies for recycling, processing secondary raw materials and producing alternative materials.
- Protecting against microplastic pollution: introducing regulations to limit the release of microplastics from products such as cosmetics, clothing, car tires and others.

Waste management according to should be based on the principles of a circular economy (CE), minimizing waste and protecting the environment from its negative impact. Waste management should lead to minimizing the negative impact of waste on the environment, but also contribute to the creation of a more sustainable economic system. The implementation of these goals should take place with the cooperation and involvement of all social groups, i.e. citizens, companies and governments.

Raw Minerals Extraction and Mining

- Immediate prohibiting of mining and other activities degrading the environment in protected areas, and stopping the projects that are not

adhered to the strict environmental standards (e.g. lithium exploitation in Serbia or opencast coal mines in Poland and Czechia).

- Strengthening the local geological institutions to be able to engage in applied research and looking for the deposits of raw materials, not leaving it to private investors.
- Promoting solutions that enable easy recovery of valuable raw materials (e.g. rare earth metals) at the end of their life cycle.
- Development of technologies enabling more efficient use of raw materials in production processes.
- Ensuring opportunities for retraining for people involved in the extraction of natural resources.
- Ensuring appropriate and safe working conditions for people who will continue to be involved in the extraction of natural resources.
- Protecting the rights of local communities and indigenous people in areas where mining is carried out and ensuring a fair sharing of benefits arising from the possible exploitation of raw materials, including consultations with residents and compensation for environmental damage. A complete ban on the extraction of raw materials from the bottom of the oceans and seas, which are key ecosystems for preserving biodiversity.
- Requirement to restore areas damaged by mining to their natural state, including reclamation and reforestation.

We acknowledge the fact that research and exploitation of mineral raw materials is a prerequisite for the provision of energy and industrial development of any country. We believe that it needs to be done in possibly sustainable manner. This requires changes of paradigma of putting profit over the environment, changing existing regulations and introducing many new ones. CDN believes that the Eastern European societies must regain the ability to examine and control the use of its mineral wealth in a sustainable way and not being a subject of exploitation of foreign companies and corrupted authoritarian governments.

Biodiversity & Environmental Protection

We in CDN believe that the Eastern Europe has the potential to be a region of clean air, accessible and clean water, fertile land, rich and diverse biodiversity. A healthy and sustainable environment is essential for our own well-being and quality of life. By protecting ecosystems and keeping air, water and soil clean, we take care of our physical and mental health. Second, environmental protection has a significant impact on our future and future generations. Ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combating climate change are key to long-term social and economic well-being. Protecting the environment is essential for our well-being, the future of our children and future generations, and for preserving the beauty and richness of our planet.

Environmental Protection

- Stronger penalties and stronger prosecution for environmental crimes.
- Introduction of the concept of ecocide in the international law.
- Establishment of the functions of the Environmental Ombudsman and the Animal Rights Protection Ombudsman on both European and national levels.
- Introduction of the category of crimes against nature, air, water and other natural resources.
- Effective application of the polluter pays principle for all sectors, including the livestock sector.
- Improving functional connectivity between habitats to enable the development and strengthening of populations of different species and sufficient individual or genetic exchange, as well as species migration and adaptation to climate change.

It is important to note that environmental protection has a pan-European and global dimension, as ecological problems know no national borders. International cooperation and taking action for sustainable development are essential for maintaining ecological balance on a global scale. The environmental crimes are the fourth largest criminal activity in the world and it is increasing by five to seven percent every year - they need to be more prosecuted. Moreover, lack of the international prosecution of ecocide leads to the situation that the nature is “silent victim” of war. Therefore we propose solutions on pan-European level that will contribute to a more effective protection of all the ecosystems in all the Eastern European countries.

Biodiversity

- Restoring degraded habitats to conditions that enable ecosystems to function properly
- Excluding at least 30 percent of the Eastern Europe's lands and seas from industrial activities by 2035 and placing at least 10 percent under strict protection.
- The obligation to create a 6 m wide wild green belt on every 2 ha of cultivated fields (flower belts, shrubs).
- Introduction of restrictions on the use of plant protection products and artificial and natural fertilizers.
- Designation of new and connection of interrupted ecological corridors.
- More effort on the European and national levels to stop the spread of invasive species.
- Ban on the import and sale of exotic animal species and increased control over the import and sale of exotic plant species.
- Supporting the joint development of technologies and joint scientific research programs for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and increasing the possibilities of scientific research and monitoring.
- Identification by 2030 and then elimination, withdrawal or reform of incentives and subsidies harmful to biodiversity.

The solutions for protecting the biodiversity need to be implemented on the wide scale. Ensuring the diversity of ecosystems and protecting wildlife has not only intrinsic value, but also contributes to ecological balance and ecosystem stability.

We believe that biodiversity protection needs to be talked more, put into the foreground and be more visible in both advocacy and institutions. Thus, the powers of institutions responsible for biodiversity protection on European, national and local level need to be increased, especially in terms of their capacity for monitoring and checking the implementation of measures and sanctioning those who do not respect them.

National Parks and Protected Areas

- Expansion of existing national parks and creation of new ones, as well as establishment of strictly protected areas within the boundaries of nature conservation area.

- Introduction of European regulations that accelerate the process of creating national parks, reserves and protected areas and a ban on reducing the areas of parks within the established boundaries.

- Strict protection of all natural and old-growth forests, as well as peat bogs, natural meadows, wetlands, mangroves and seagrass meadows, as well as exclusion of mountain forests from economic exploitation.

- Subsidies for municipalities for the construction of technical infrastructure, benefits for residents/women for creating national parks in the area.

- Promotion and support of activities such as rewilding (a form of environmental restoration that involves reducing the impact of humans on ecosystems)

National parks are key areas of nature conservation that provide shelter for many endangered species of plants and animals. Their expansion would allow for the preservation of greater biodiversity and the protection of unique ecosystems. Moreover, expanding the number of national parks would allow more people to access such places, which would contribute to increased ecological awareness and pro-ecological attitudes. They are also attractive places for active recreation, nature observation and ecotourism. These activities are long-term in nature and serve to preserve unique and irreplaceable natural values for the good of our planet.

In most Eastern European countries there are too few national parks, in 10 countries they constitute less than 2% of the area. CDN stands for the expanding the number and area of national parks in all the Eastern European countries as vital for nature conservation, ecological education, the development of responsible tourism and the future natural heritage. This is an important step towards sustainable development and preserving our planet for future generations.

Water Policy

- Clean and potable water for every household, with the free access to water sufficient to cover basic physical and hygienic requirements and progressive charge on use of water.

- Regulation of the monopolies in water provision, ban on the privatisation of water sources and, when possible, return of them to public control.

- Increasing the quality of surface waters and restoring resources and improving the quality of groundwater by, among others, controlling

constructions near water sources and introducing regulation regarding using water resources to exploit materials.

- Popularization and introduction of subsidies for small retention - creation and maintenance of rain gardens placed under gutters and supplied with rainwater.
- Introducing a ban on draining wetlands; restoration of peatlands, as well as implementing a national river renaturation plans by 2030.
- Popularizing retention in drainage ditches for agricultural purposes.
- Creating an automated early warning system and continuous monitoring of water quality.
- Adapting the flood and drought protection program to current climate challenges and creating European legal framework for compensation system that is adapted to the real needs of the injured.
- Granting legal personality to standing and flowing waters.

Water protection is extremely important, as water is a fundamental natural resource, necessary for human life and health and the functioning of ecosystems. By protecting the purity and quality of these waters, we ensure access to safe and appropriate quality drinking water and the protection of public health. In addition, surface and groundwater play an important role in the economy, providing raw materials, energy and recreational areas.

We believe that the right to water is human right at should be included in the highest legal documents, as constitutions. Companies that use a lot of water should pay progressively more for their consumption, and polluters should be punished much more severely.

Saving the Sea

- Good Environmental Status of seas, as defined in EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, achieved latest by 2030, including maintaining biodiversity of the seas, reducing the contaminants, marine litter, underwater noise, minimising human-induced eutrophication, and stopping of the human activities as coastal infrastructural development, sand extraction, etc., that alter hydrographical conditions.
- Area protection (strict protection) of at least 30% of the area in the entire Baltic & Adriatic Seas no later than 2030, increasing of protected area in the safe areas of Mediterranean and Black Sea.
- Discontinuation of international policies that may have a negative impact on the state of the seas, in particular the promotion of international

waterways with high navigability class and the increased use of artificial fertilisers.

- Introducing restrictive fishing controls and introducing a system of penalties and fees for excessive catch of certain fish species.
- Adoption of integrated coastal protection plans and programmes by 2030
- Elimination on the illegal discharges from ships, with effective penalties and increasing the follow-up of the alerts about ship pollution from sources as CleanSeaNet.
- Intensification of work on the cleaning of water from post-war waste and removal of toxic compounds in the Baltic, Mediterranean, Adriatic, Ionian and Black Sea regions.

We believe we need a holistic framework to protect our seas. We need to acknowledge the importance of the seas: biodiversity, natural resources, protecting from extreme weather phenomena, natural heritage and tourism opportunities. However, the current efforts to protect the seas in the Eastern Europe, e.g. EU Strategies for Adriatic and Ionian, and for the Baltic Sea Regions, are not sufficient. The level of protection of the seas is very low, even despite the improvement of the situation during last years, especially in the Baltic Sea region. For example in 2023, only 7,33% of Adriatic Sea was protected, and only 0,07% strictly protected.

We insist action is needed to protect the Baltic and Mediterranean seas, as well as the Black Sea in regions where possible and to create a comprehensive plan for the protection and recultivation of the Black Sea – that currently suffers contend with mines, polluted shorelines and severe damage to marine wildlife caused by Russia – after the withdrawal of the Russian army from the occupied territories of Ukraine.

Forests

- Reforestation projects carried out in appropriate ecosystems using native tree and plant species to restore habitats to a previously similar condition.
- Promoting natural forest regeneration, striving to maintain the species composition of stands as closely as possible to the habitat, protecting microhabitats and increasing the amount of dead wood in forests.
- Creation of agglomeration/suburban forests, e.g. the so-called Green Rings, subordinated to social purposes without conducting forest management.
- Raising the transparency requirements of entities managing public forests, especially in budgetary matters, and obligating them for binding public consultations.
- Introduction of a ban on deforestation for industrial or agricultural purposes.
- Demarcation and protection of primary forests and introduction of a ban on logging in forests of high ecological value.

Forests are an ecosystem that maintains biodiversity and play an important role in climate regulation by absorbing carbon dioxide, they purify the air and water, creating a healthy living environment and have social and economic significance as places of recreation and a source of timber and forest raw materials.

Many of the Eastern European forests have been significantly negative affected by human activity: not protected or turned into arable land. We believe it is necessary to take action for the sustainable management of forests and the protection of these valuable ecosystems: introduction of new management standards that take into account social participation and transparency in forest management, as well as the protection of biodiversity and sustainable use of forest resources.

Urban Ecosystems

- Development of blue (water) and green (land) infrastructure in cities.
- Promoting the planting of more trees and flowers and installing bird feeders to attract wildlife.
- Revitalising existing facilities, replacing paved surfaces with green infrastructure.
- Implementing ecological solutions such as rain gardens, green roofs and composting systems and the use of alternative materials such as wood, bamboo or cob in building and construction projects.

The Eastern Europe has been struggling with urban chaos for years, which affects also the biodiversity. Our postulates on Spatial Policy and Planning are presented in the separate section, but here we have additions that focus particularly biodiversity in cities.

Air Quality

- Connecting to district heating and encouraging thermal modernization of apartments, especially by subsidies for individual heat pumps powered by clean energy.
- Ban on driving cars in city centers and introducing a car classification allowing for prohibiting driving cars that do not meet environmental standards.
- Expanding infrastructure for pedestrians, bicycles and public transport, e.g. by investment in city and municipal bicycles programmes, as well as exploring the opportunity of dotations for the purchase of private bicycles.
- The obligation to inform residents about the air quality in the city, e.g. through alerts, as well as increasing the number of smog sensors in cities, primarily on public buildings, e.g. schools, hospitals.

Air protection is extremely important - air pollution destroys human health, ecosystems and the economy. Clean air is essential for humans and ecological balance. Unfortunately, several Eastern European countries exceed the safe norms of PM2.5 concentration even 3-6 times, occupying the top ten places in the pollution ranking in Europe, leading to hundreds of thousands premature deaths every year. Hence, CDN believes that the fight against smog should be one of the priorities of Eastern European governments.

Microplastics Pollution

- Ban on the production and sale of synthetic clothing, and cosmetics and cleaning products containing microplastics.
- Restrictive programs limiting the production and sale of materials and products consisting of or containing plastic
- Subsidy programs for municipal and individual purification of tap water in order to reduce the demand for purchasing water in plastic bottles and containers.
- Subsidy for municipal programs for cleaning the city from pollution and waste, including projects for creating new waste bins in public spaces and emptying them.
- Withdrawal of the need to print receipts and invoices in favor of digital ones.

Microplastics pollution come from various sources, such as cosmetics, synthetic clothing, packaging and plastic waste. Microplastics can be ingested by aquatic organisms, enter the food chain and cause harmful health effects. Thus, the reduction of microplastics pollution is necessary and will have positive impact on aquatic ecosystems, marine life and human health.

Animal Rights

Protecting animal rights is important from an ethical and ecological point of view. It prevents cruelty and abuse, maintains ecological balance and protects biodiversity. Animals have inherent rights that should be respected and factored into the transition towards a sustainable and just society. We must recognize animals as sentient beings deserving of protection from harm and reflect thoughtfully on our role within the broader animal kingdom.

Framework for Animal Rights

- Taking into account the needs of animal migration when designating border fortifications and infrastructure facilities.
- Introducing a ban on the use of plant protection products that have a harmful effect on insects, birds and other animals.
- Creating an European directive on a response system in the case of injured and roadkill animals.
- Prohibition of keeping animals in cages, on chains or ties, as well as other confinements.
- Adapting public spaces, such as parks, public facilities and public transport to be accesible by pets and their owners.
- Creating pet cemeteries in cities to ensure that people can bury their animals in humane conditions.
- Mandatory microchipping of domestic and wild animals and creation of a single pan-European registration database of microchipped animals.

As CDN, we believe that governments should remember to ensure animal welfare, combat cruelty and educate about responsible animal care. Pets are sentient beings that deserve respect, protection and appropriate care. Eastern European policies in this area should include principles of ethics, welfare and social responsibility.

Homeless Animals Protection

- Introducing reliable financing for running shelters for homeless animals, as well as mandatory inspections of shelters, including private shelters.
- Defining at the European level infrastructure standards in which specific species of animals stay, possibly close to the natural habitat, and including them in guidelines checked during the inspections
- Promoting the reduction of animal reproduction and sterilization by organizing campaigns to finance treatments in cities and municipalities.
- Promoting the adoption of animals instead of purchasing them from a farm through social campaigns or other benefits, e.g. tax breaks.

Homeless animals often suffer from a lack of shelter, food, and medical care. Actions taken by Eastern European governments in this area are either insufficient or downright cruel, as in the case of Turkey's 2024 amendment to the Animal Rights law proposing the killing of stray dogs. Providing homeless animals with care, adoption, or appropriate shelter helps reduce suffering and provide them with a chance for a better life, contribute to public safety and promote empathy and responsibility in society.

Protection of "Circus" Animals

- Immediate introduction of the ban on the use of wild animals in circuses in all the countries, with the long-term aim of ban on showing, training or keeping animals in circuses and other such institutions, enterprises and projects.
- Support, including financial, for zoos in adopting animals rescued from trafficking, illegal breeding, circuses, or those threatened with extinction in the wild. That goes in hand with introducing controls in zoos, considering the conditions in which animals are kept, taking into account the requirements of their species regarding physiological and social needs. In the future, move away from exhibition zoos to zoos as shelters for animals in specific situations (such as rescues, unable to survive in the wild, etc.).
- Introducing a ban on euthanasia of healthy individuals, the so-called zoothanasia.

Many animals are used in circuses and other entertainment institutions for purely entertainment purposes. They are often subjected to brutal training and living conditions that are harmful to their physical and emotional health. Though some measures to prohibit or limit the use of animals in circuses have already been adopted in some Eastern European countries, they are not introduced in all and are far from perfect. Banning this practice protects animals from suffering, ensuring their right to a dignified life and to avoid being exploited for entertainment purposes.

Protection of “Laboratory” Animals

- Introducing an absolute ban on animal testing for new products in all countries. In countries where such legislation is already in place to some extent, it should also include testing of dietary supplements and chemicals, foodstuffs, feeds or other substances.
- Introducing EU sanctions against products from the countries where animal testing is legal.
- Ban on using animal research for higher education purposes and for training to acquire or improve professional competences.
- Grants from international institutions such as the EU for research on alternatives to animal testing.

The use of animals for scientific and laboratory purposes involves suffering and harm to animals that are subjected to tests, medical procedures and experiments. Prohibiting such use of animals is an ethical issue and ensures the protection of their welfare. Scientific and technological progress allows the development of the research methods that do not require the use of animals, eg. cell models, artificial tissues or computer simulations. Focusing on methods not involving the use of animals promotes innovation and leads to more progressive science that is consistent with ethical and humanitarian values.

Protection of Working Animals

- Creation of a European system protecting animals working in uniformed services and services. Introduction at the European level of detailed requirements specified by species, as to the character, place and duration (both on a daily basis, as well as the total number of years spent working) of work, residence, welfare and maintenance of the animal, including the requirement for the lifelong maintenance of an animal withdrawn from service by the state or the employer.
- Allowing the animal to remind with the person or within their circle if the animal is retiring, granted they meet strict conditions and requirements could be a nice addition.
- Introduction of a ban on the sale of animals withdrawn from work in uniformed services to slaughterhouses.

Protecting working animals and limiting their exploitation for commercial purposes ensures the dignified treatment of animals and minimizes suffering and promotes the development of alternative, more humane methods. This not only protects animals, but also leads to the efficient and sustainable use of resources and has a positive impact on the ethics, promoting empathy and awareness of animal rights.

Protection of Farmed Animals

- Introducing a ban on fur farming in all countries by 2035 by the means defined in Fur Free Europe initiative, and setting a road map at European level for phasing out the breeding sector of all species, including fish.
- Immediate ban on cage farming.
- Introduction of bans on particularly inhumane practices such as: killing animals without prior stunning; culling; trimming the beaks of poultry or the tails of pigs; fattening ducks and geese for foie gras; a ban on the sale and import of products derived from such practices, and more.
- Reducing the use of antimicrobial agents on farms, leading to a reduction in the problem of antibiotic resistance and in the risk of epidemics of zoonotic diseases.
- Introducing high requirements regarding the preparation of people working on farms and handling animal transport - training, among others, in legal regulations, completed with certificates confirming completion of training.
- Mandatory inspections – with obligation of double controls or audits – of units where animals are kept at all stages of breeding, setting restrictive assessment criteria, specified as to the species, as well as introducing mandatory veterinary inspections at all stages of breeding and mandatory monitoring in slaughterhouses and on industrial farms.
- Introducing a ban on opening new slaughterhouses and creating national plans for phasing out the work of existing slaughterhouses.

The farming animals deserve painless livelihood. We propose the legislations to ensure it, while working on the phase-out of the animal-based food production.

We believe that the plant-based food system is a necessity. We believe that the proposed solutions will allow for a fair transition to a plant-based food system, with clear rules for its implementation and with care for the welfare of farm animals during the phase-out of farming.

Protection of Wild Animals

- Introducing the ban on the removal and sale of exotic animal species, introduction of European Positive List of animals that can be kept as pets.
- Total ban on hunting in the Eastern European countries by 2035.
- Adapting urban spaces so they do not cross and overtake animal spaces (e.g. parts of forests, etc).
- Introduction of a ban on placing bird-deterrent spikes on buildings and roofs.
- Obliging property owners and managers to secure glass surfaces of buildings so that they do not pose a threat to birds.
- Obliging local governments to set up watering troughs for wild animals.
- Stronger regulations on fishing quota and use of lower impact fishing techniques in order to fight overfishing, regenerate fish populations and marine restorations.

We believe that protecting wild animals is extremely important for modern society. It is an investment in the future of our planet, maintaining ecological balance and ensuring a lasting natural heritage for future generations.

Wild animals play an important role in maintaining ecosystems, acting in the food chain, dispersing seeds and pollinating plants. Their presence affects the ecological balance and the preservation of biodiversity. Wild animals are often threatened with extinction due to poaching, habitat loss, climate change and other factors. The protection of these species is crucial to preserving genetic diversity and ensuring the survival and future development of ecosystems.

Moreover, in the ethical aspect, taking care of their well-being and avoiding their exploitation for commercial purposes is an expression of respect for their rights and dignity.

Finally, the protection of wild animals affects our own lives. The ecosystems in which they live provide us with many benefits, such as clean air, drinking water, food and natural materials. Their preservation and protection contribute to our well-being and the sustainable development of society.

Veganism and Production of Food

- Negotiation of a global Plant Based Treaty as a companion to the UNFCCC Paris Agreement to prioritize transition away from animal-based food systems as the method of climate change mitigation.
- Reduction of VAT rate on plant-based food. At the same time, introduction of higher VAT or sales tax on food containing animal products (meat, milk, eggs, honey and their derivatives).
- Introducing a ban on subsidies or other forms of sponsorship of the production of products containing meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, and ban on advertising such products.
- Providing of at least one plant-based options for meals in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons and other government institutions.
- The obligation to mark animal-based products with appropriate labels informing about the environmental effects related to the production of these products, also in the commercial communication.
- Planning of long-term rewilding, reforestation and marine restoration projects in the areas damaged by agriculture.
- Inclusion of national and European regulations to ban the import of products that do not match animal welfare standards mentioned in this and previous subchapters.

Sustainable and ethical food and its production contribute to the protection of the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption and the destruction of ecosystems. Veganism itself promotes a healthy lifestyle, helps prevent many diseases, such as heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

Moreover, animal industry is one of the biggest contributors to climate crisis, being responsible for ~14.5% of human-produced greenhouse gas emissions and ~20% of total land use. Transition to plant-based food system is therefore crucial in fight against the climate crisis.

The solutions we propose aim to eliminate the exploitation of animals in the food and clothing industry. By choosing veganism, we support justice for animals and contribute to the climate change mitigation.

Economy

Work that works for all

Work constitutes a large part of most people's lives and livelihoods are often directly linked to income generated by labour. Therefore, fair and just labour rights are crucial aspects of personal well-being and functioning democracies. The right not to be exploited in the workplace is fundamental for a healthy society. Women, youth and minorities are still the most vulnerable to

exploitation in their work- there should be stronger protections for these groups. Today's economic model has seen a rise in jobs that offer unsatisfactory working conditions such as low wages, unstable hours, tasks that are not mentally stimulating, and precarious contracts. These developments are detrimental to society as a whole. Our economy and concept of work should focus on providing jobs that enable material and mental well-being.

Flexible Social Security

- Guaranteeing a living wage, or income that is enough to sustain your basic needs and diginified living, is regularly indexed.
- Guaranteed access to health and income security, particularly in cases of temporary/permanent unemployment, sickness, occupational injury, parenthood or loss of a breadwinner.
- Protecting parents going on parental leave: financial (same salary and benefits), work and position guarantees. This includes entrepreneurs and those working in private sector.
- Introducing regulations that will actually eliminate the gender disparity in earnings.
- Unemployment benefits are available for at least one year.
- Better social benefits that provide decent living conditions.

Social security lies at the very core of decent work. The growing incidence of informal work has led to stagnant or declining rates of social security coverage. Social security is a fundamental human right, albeit being enjoyed by only a small proportion of people. Without social security, we are left with suppressed, exploited and vulnerable individuals, including those who have a source of income.

We, young greens, believe that no one should live to work but have the work that allows them to have a fulfilling life. Lack of social security coverage has a particularly detrimental impact on marginalized and vulnerable populations as the majority of them engage in casual labour, homework and certain types of informal and self-employment. Thus, social security and decent work must be intertwined to live a dignified life and fulfil the very basic needs of people.

Workers' rights

- Uniform contributions regardless of the form of employment, will eliminate financial incentives for employers to offer civil law contracts.
- Abolishment of contracts that do not guarantee a set number of hours.
- Abolishment of unpaid or below-the-minimum-wage internships that doenot provide social benefits and rights such as healthcare.
- Obligation of payment of interest on delayed wages at a rate of at least 0.2% per day.
- Protection of labour unions and collective bargaining.
- The salary cap guaranteeing that the highest salary in the company is no more than 6 times the lowest salary.
- Strengthening the institution of the labour inspectorate, and sanitary and epidemiological services, and establishing European standards for such institutions in particular countries.
- Reduction of working hours from 40h to 38.5h in law on work, with the stronger position on the reduction of working hours to 35 hours per week as well as a 4-day work week as an opt-in for progressive companies in branch collective agreements (under the assumption that the effect of such working conditions would start to become common in certain branches and start to spread out).

We believe that workers' rights are human rights. Hence, they should be defined in law. There should be an end to circumventing labour law by hiring on civic law or B2B contracts. Labor protection should be supported by strong and well-funded state institutions, such as labour inspectorates, which have the administrative resources to actually control and punish entrepreneurs who do not respect labour law.

More regulations should be introduced at the European level, in the future even a European minimum wage, to reduce inequalities between countries and limit brain drain and youth emigration.

New Types of Work

- Investment in Green jobs and support to workers in just transition.
- Fighting structural unemployment and unemployment islands: with specific strategies established in cooperation with the local government, such as the use of existing skills, wide access to vocational training or financial resources for those establishing new enterprises and cooperatives.
- Gig workers (based on flexible, temporary, or freelance jobs) are to be included in labour law and guaranteed the workers' rights.

Transformations of the labour market – including the progressive automation of production and the growing role of the digital economy – is both the opportunity and the challenge. The energetic transformation or increasing automation of production may contribute to the creation of new, high-paid jobs in the advanced technology sector – or contribute to reduced employment and increased social stratification. CDN believes that law-making and regulations should go hand in hand with technological progress, not be established after a few years, but also not slowing it down. We consider it necessary to further establish policies on, for example, the use of AI, at the European level.

Democracy at the Workplace & Solidarity

- Support for unionisation, with laws on European levels supporting unionisation in multi-national companies.
- Enabling and protecting by law of the solidarity strikes.
- Access to information about the company's activities for workers' representatives.
- Prohibition of secret collection and processing of digital data and surveillance in the workplace.

We believe it is impossible to build democracy in a country that focuses on low-paid and poorly protected work. Democracy in the workplace is thus crucial, thus we support unionising and workers' representation in decision-making institutions at the workplace. CDN will strive to empower workers also internally, within the office, as well by cooperating with, e.g. local syndicate representatives, at our events.

Solidarity is key. Trade unions should be able to strike in solidarity with other industries or protest against policies affecting their work. On the other hand, we must demand solidarity from industries, and a just transformation or other political decisions cannot be held hostage to lobbying by the strong industries, such as miners or farmers.

Health & Safety in the Workplace

- Ensuring the protection of occupational health and safety standards, as well as sanitary-epidemiological ones.
- Improving the safety of workers in factories to meet international standards, e.g. proper safety equipment for workers, protection against dangerous chemicals or implementing appropriate fire and alarm procedures.
- Additional insurance for employees performing work that poses a health risk.
- Obligation to consult work management algorithms with workers' representatives.
- Mental health reasons an equally important for sick leave as physical conditions.
- Implementation of safe space policies and the creation of special departments in companies that directly address discrimination and aim to prevent violations of human rights and safe space policies in day-to-day work.
- Special support for the workers from vulnerable groups in unionising.
- More training on the topics of non-discrimination and equality for the decision-makers for them to be able to make non-biased judgements and create up-to-date progressive policies.
- Interviews should be non-biased, and questions about personal plans for the future, such as family, should not affect the evaluation or salaries.

In many Eastern European countries, occupational health and safety regulations are too weak or not implemented. As a result, workers are not adequately protected. CDN believes it needs to change: standards should be strict and uniform, and employee health protection should be a priority.

The same goes for mental health which should be taken care of by regulators. We are advocating for the recognising of mental health as a valid sick leave reason and for establishing safe space policies in workplaces. We encourage calling out companies using pinkwashing and greenwashing to hide their violations of workers' rights.

Trade & Fiscal Policy

The unfair tax system in Eastern Europe serves only the interests of the rich and populists, increasing social inequality. Taxes are too complicated for citizens, and the procedure for spending them is unclear and non-transparent. Kleptocratic leaders and authoritarian politicians trade with regimes around the world at the expense of citizens, ready to turn their countries into poor bridging jurisdictions just to stay in power at all costs. We propose a different vision of the world: in which citizens know where their taxes are

going and that they are spent for their benefit, and trade serves the well-being of all people.

Trade

- Stopping the trade with aggressor countries and authoritarian regimes.
- Replacement of the undemocratic trade deals that favour corporate over citizens' interests with fair trade deals where partners benefit equally.
- Serious scrutiny of all trade agreements: negotiations must be transparent and review from citizens groups and civil society should play a crucial role.
- Trade relationships between Eastern Europe and the EU and other major partners to be truly beneficial to all parties.
- All trade agreements to have a sincere environmental evaluation chapter taking the centre stage of the contract.

As one of the key drivers of globalisation, trade is a crucial aspect of our societies and current economic model. This has resulted in the proliferation of economic inequality and instability, rather than creating an economy that benefits everyone. This has been driven by reckless self-interested behaviour by multinationals and the financial sector and aggressive trade policies that are created in the interest of corporations, not the wider society. This gives unequal power to business interests, leading countries to a democratic deficit. Trade is important and can benefit humanity greatly, but it must be undertaken in the spirit of fair cooperation and respect for the environment.

Taxation

- Progressive income tax, with clear and transparent rules, and a tax-free amount. The exact tax system varies from country to country but should

include at least four tax brackets, with the highest being at least 50% above five times the national average salary.

- Taxing the rich: introducing or increasing taxation of capital gains, wealth tax (5% on assets over one million euros) as well as a property tax on owning a third and subsequent flats.
- Make polluters pay: introducing or increasing the ecological taxes, such as raw material and energy consumption tax and environmental pollution tax, as the key component of the taxation system.
- Reducing the VAT burden on households by reducing VAT on basic food products etc.
- Combating tax avoidance and VAT fraud, e.g. by increasing the transparency of company earnings, dividends and payments, or EU regulations against tax havens.
- Introducing or tightening inheritance tax.
- Exemption from income tax (up to the average salary) for people entering the labour market up to the age of 26.
- Increasing the corporate tax rate in countries to at least 21% (EU average in 2024).
- Tax offices should be a friendly place, focusing on advice and support for people with lower incomes and micro-enterprises.
- Better tax regulations that does not allow for corruption and tax fraud by rich.

The tax system in Eastern Europe is de facto regressive, with the poorest paying proportionally more than the richest. This is due to excessive VAT taxation, low tax progression, no taxation of capital, or tax avoidance by the richest. Therefore, we consider it a priority to relieve small and medium-sized households and increase taxes on property, capital and environmental taxes. The rich must pay! The polluters must pay!

Moreover, we believe that taxes should be simple and transparent, and visits to tax offices should cease to be something unpleasant. Together with increasing the transparency of government spending and improving the quality of public services, this will lead to increased trust in the state.

Public procurement and regulatory institutions

- Introduction of the obligation to use social and ecological clauses in public procurement.
- Transparent and open digital platform that will ensure all citizens have insight into the public spending in order or everyone to understand and benefit from it.
- Mandate that all public procurement decisions prioritize environmentally sustainable and climate-friendly solutions.
- Strengthen local economies and reduce dependency on multinational corporations.

Public money should be spent in a way that is understandable and benefits citizens, as well as be an example of the best and most responsible investment. Therefore, Public procurement should support high environmental and social standards.

We believe in the great role of regulatory and control institutions, such as supreme audit institutions, labour inspection, or the offices of the Ombudsman or the Children's Rights Ombudsman. To ensure that public money is spent properly these institutions should be independent of the authorities and adequately and stably financed, attractive for potential competent workers, and those in power had to accept their decisions recommendations.

Consumer protection

- Regulations against deliberately shortening the life of products.
- Penalties equal to or greater than illegal profits in case of price fixing.
- Regulations that prioritise green and environmental handling and production by all the big companies and factories.
- Having adequate quality control of the products,
- Fight against unethical and unenviromental production, including fast fashion, in order to have betetr, more sustainable products that come from transparent sources and prioritise satisfaction of the consumers.

Companies exploit the insufficient consumer protection law in a variety of ways, for example by imposing systems of unsolvable subscriptions or by charging arbitrary penalties. The consumer, in comparison to corporations, has little power and is not able to fight for his rights in court. Moreover, corporations often mislead consumers by using the greenwashing and healthwashing practices, or fabricating opinions, taking advantage of the customer's susceptibility to mis- and disinformation. CDN believes that there is need for radical and systematic action to improve the consumers' rights, so that the consumer has support from institutions, and companies acting to their detriment expose themselves to significant, if necessary, even multi-million fines. Production

should be transparent and ethical so that it comes up with quality stuff that benefit the consumers.

Green entrepreneurship

- Further simplification of procedures and support in the process of establishing and operating a company and activities aimed at stimulating economic initiative by creating favourable conditions for people who want to start their own small-scale entrepreneurship.
- Support – e.g. by means of lower VAT rates, payment of part of social security contributions or additional points in public procurement – for social economy institutions, such as social cooperatives or sheltered employment enterprises.
- Legislation to protect small enterpreneurs from harmful contract terms, as excessively long payment periods.
- Simulating the demand for green jobs on the labour market - in the real sector - industry and commercial activities.
- Research and development tax incentive to speed-up the investment in green and innovative solutions in private sector.

Small and medium-sized enterprises, especially innovative and green businesses, are one of the foundations of Eastern Europe. They should have good and stable conditions, without excessive bureaucratic obstacles. They should also be provided with at least equal conditions compared to large companies, also in public procurement.

At the same time, we are against fictitious self-employment and fictional b2b contracts, through which companies circumvent workers' rights. The labor inspectorate should impose heavy fines on companies that violate or circumvent workers' rights.

Infrastructure

The maintenance, renovation and construction of infrastructure of all kinds: railways, bridges, water supply channels etc., is neglected in all Eastern European countries. In many countries only large infrastructure investments such as stadiums, highways or airports are promoted, while the infrastructure necessary for the inhabitants is neglected, which leads to inconveniences for the inhabitants, pollution and sometimes tragedy as with the collapse of a railway station in Novi Sad, Serbia in 2024. This has to change: infrastructure projects must serve residents and take the environment into account!

Public Services

- Improvement of the functioning of local public services, especially public utility companies by ensuring their stable funding.
- Creating a rulebook for determining tariffs and service standards of public utility companies that is transparent, based on quality of service and not dependent on arbitrary decisions of administrators.
- Ensure that energy supply, water services, and waste management remain publicly owned and operated to prioritize the public good over private profit, with modernisation of energy grids and water distribution systems.
- Progressive pricing models ensuring that basic utility services are affordable for all, while at the same time discouraging overextensive consumption.
- Increase transparency in procurement processes and ensure public control over essential services.
- Protect workers in the public sector by ensuring fair wages, better working conditions, and opportunities for professional development.

Digitalisation and human-orientation of public services whenever possible.Citizens needs to feel that their taxes are spent for their benefit and that the civil servant is there to help them. Good quality public services include not only the previously mentioned housing, education, health care and spatial planning, but also energy supply, water and waste management, social assistance, but also libraries, and law enforcement services. CDN believes there is urgent need for solutions that restores the trust in public institutions, and that make public services working for everyone, especially the most vulnerable.

Transportation

- Transfer of funds from road construction to the construction of the railway network.
- "Trucks on tracks" - development of freight rail infrastructure, low rates for access to rail infrastructure for intermodal transport and implementation of the principles of "user pays" and "polluter pays" in transport, i.e. introducing or increasing fees for the use of roads by vehicles with a permissible total weight of over 3.5 tonnes.
- Expansion of the passenger railway network in the Eastern Europe:
    - High-speed rail connection of neighbouring Eastern European capitals by 2035, with a well-developed network of night connections and connections.
    - Local transport well connected to long-distance trains, with reliable, regular timetables.

    - European Ticketing Platform: a single European travel and tickets search engine for trains and buses.

- Increasing the funds for the critical transport infrastructure (e.g. bridges, railway stations).
- Definitive prioritisation of public transport in order to minimise car usage and environmental impact of the transportation.
- Benefits for those using cycling as their primary means of transportation.
- Incentivize the use of biofuels and renewable energy in transport.

Road transport is currently prioritized in most Eastern European countries, causing transport exclusion, forcing people to use cars, causing thousands of deaths and injuries in traffic accidents every year, and contributing to air and noise pollution. We see the need to change the paradigm in transport, with emphasis on public transport. To do this, it is necessary to properly maintain and modernize railway lines and public road transport, so that travel is competitive with your own car in terms of time, price and comfort.

Note: this section talks about the necessary changes that need to take place in the design and construction of infrastructure - our recommendations for sustainable mobility and more details about public transport can be found in the Spatial Policy & Planning and Mobility (sub)chapters.

Industry Policy

- The European Green and Social Transition Fund to finance green infrastructure projects such as public transport and rail, renewable energy sources and grid connections, and housing renovation.
- Transition of industry and energy sector to renewables in fastest way possible, ensuring compliance with regulations, especially the "polluter pays" principle.
- Mass electrification in all sectors, support for electromobility and charging stations.
- Development of industries crucial to security, such as pharmaceutical factories.

Good industry policy is a need to have a dynamic and competitive economy, creating millions of green jobs in cutting-edge industries. We need an investment plan to finance green industry across the European Union. The green transition equals new railways, new factories, new job opportunities.

At the same time, we believe that industrial policy cannot be introduced at the expense of deregulation or increased emissions, and the profits from investment in industry should be shared by citizens and not just go to private investors.

Research, development & innovation

There is need for more serious funding in the speres of research, development and innovation in eastern Europe, these spheres need to be publicly funded and prioritised, in order to ensure that countries have greater future when it comes to scientific developments and research. This also leads to democratization of knowledge and accelerates the innovation. As many young people involved in these fields immigrate to the west because of the lack of the support, the states should encourage brain gain. All development and funding of RDI should be in line with environmental and climate regulations.

Research & Development Policy

- Increasing state funding for science, without omitting basic research and the social sciences and humanities.
- Promotion of brain gain that will encourage youth that immigrated because they weren't available to work in the field to return to the Eastern European region.
- Better woking conditions in the RDI fields and with related jobs.
- Public scholarships that would encourage youth to choose to work in the fields connected to science.
- Significantly boost government funding for R&D in critical areas such as renewable energy, healthcare, education technology, and sustainable agriculture.
- Ensure that all publicly funded research is open access, allowing innovations to benefit society rather than being locked behind paywalls or privatized.
- Key technological, health and scientific innovations should remain under public or cooperative control to avoid monopolization and exploitation.
- Encourage cross-border research collaborations to share knowledge and resources between regions.
- Science, research and development should be basis of the developed society so the policies in Eastern European countries must priorities these spheres more. So far there is lack of funding in these fields which already caused huge brain drain in the region – young people are more likely to continue their higher education or find work after university on the west if they wish to pursue research, development and science fields. This causes radical decline in the field in the region, but also of the development in the wider society. In order for those who immigrated to return, RDI fields should be more developed, there should be ore scholarships, and youth should be encouraged to purse these fields, and adequately rewarded for all the developments.

CDN believes in the democratisation of the knowledge, which si why these areas should be approachable for all. Additionally, research findings should be freely

accessible, and the knowledge should be public, in order to avoid monopolization and personal gain by companies. Innovations must be developed in accordance with benefit of the whole society and not only for the financial gain.

Alternative economy systems

The current economic organisation, based only on economic growth, has had serious negative consequences for people and the environment. Firstly, the unequal distribution of wealth directly affects countless lives and entrenches power imbalances. Secondly, the use of natural resources to produce more and more material goods endangers the environment and affects especially the lives of the marginalised and future generations. CDN believes that alternative economy solutions, not based just on economic growth, is necessary to dismantle these economical obstacles.

Note: More on this topic can be found in report and toolkit from the CDN study session "Breaking the Barriers: Green Economics and Youth Political Participation in Eastern Europe" (2024). CDN will continue the work to enhance its ideology on the topic.

Need for circular economy

- Measuring economic progress in terms of not only growth, but sustainability and well-being of citizens.
- Transfer to circular economy, including, among others, following policies:
    - Reducing the use of primary raw materials in production and increasing the use of waste as secondary raw materials
    - Promoting business models within the circular economy, such as sharing economy.
    - Reducing the VAT tax on repair services.
    - Increasing funding for research and development on improving material efficiency and reuse of waste.
    - Obligation for the companies to create products that last longer and are repairable, and obligation to recycle withdrawn products.
    - Extending the repairability of buildings, as well as their usable life.
    - Collaborating with industry experts to develop roadmaps for the circular economy.
- More research and discussions on the alternative economic models that prioritise sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience, as opposed to profit, such as post-growth degrowth, green economy, care economy, and wellbeing economy within the Eastern European context.

The transition from a linear economy to a circular economy is needed to reduce the amount of resources used and waste generated in the economic system. In the circular economy, natural resources are used efficiently and economically by keeping using materials for as long as possible. Thus, it tackle the overconsumption problem and moves the focus from the economic profit to wellbeing.

We believe that while implementing circular economy solutions, further rethinking of economical system is needed. It must take into account the socio-historical context of Eastern Europe and be developed together with society.

Security & Foreign Policy

Eastern Europe in the world

In the context of global challenges, as the accelerating climate crisis, natural disasters, global inequalities and armed conflicts we must be able to stand up for our universal values in our neighbourhood and the world. We acknowledge the great legacy of – past and outgoing – peaceful revolutions against authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe and believe that it should be a leader in fight for democracy, human rights and peace in the world. At the same time, we see that the international cooperation is necessary to fight against democratic backsliding in Eastern Europe, its security and prosperity.

We believe that the cooperation between the countries and regions should take place both on the interpersonal, inter-organizational and intergovernmental levels. We commit to facilitate the cooperation on the first two levels, and advocate for it on the intergovernmental one.

Promoting democracy

- Work with all committed to peace, human rights, multilateralism, and international law, increasing the funding for civil society in authoritarian countries or ones affected by democratic backsliding and legal and administrative support for registration of NGOs from other European countries with threatened civil liberties.

- EU countering the growing influence of China and Russia by helping the nations in Eastern Europe, as well as in Global South in Green transition and supporting civil society in initiatives such as the Global Gateway.

- Full implementation of the EU guidelines on human rights defenders and provide easier access to visas, as well as implementation of the stronger measures against transnational repression by authoritarian regimes.

Building full democracy in the world requires the support of governments and societies from well-established democracies. On the interpersonal and interorganisational level, western European governments and NGOs, considering their greater experience and much wider funding opportunities, should also organize more capacity-building activities and give financial support to

progressive movements. European countries should also facilitate asylum and visa procedures for human rights activists and whistleblowers.

At the same time, Europe needs to be more active geopolitically. It should stop any cooperation with authoritarian and war-mongering regimes, thus avoiding the mistakes that contributed to outgoing Russian genocide in Ukraine and Israeli genocide in Gaza, particularly by pursuing a tough policy towards China and unequivocal support for Taiwan.

European Union

- Enlargement of EU by welcoming the current candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine in a fast, clear and transparent enlargement process as before the 2004 enlargement.

- Future accession negotiations to be transparent and in the best interest of all people and that information regarding accession criteria and progress are publicly available.

- Ensuring that Eastern European countries are treated as equal partners within and outside of the EU.

- Democratisation of EU's institutions by giving the real decision-making power to the European Parliament and getting rid of the unanimity rule and establishing qualified majority, changing the treaties if necessary.

- More proactivity of European Union in the foreign policy, especially in terms of collective reaction against authoritarian regimes and support of the democracy.

- Stronger sanctions against the EU governments that are breaking the rule of law and drifting towards authoritarianism, as Hungary and Slovakia, with the EU funds reaching directly the local beneficiaries.

- EU guarantees equal treatment and rights of Eastern European citizens coming to work within the EU in law as well as in practice.

We support the European Union project and believe it should be enlarged as we understand Europe as being more than just an accumulation of individual countries. Cultural, economic, historical and political reasons make Europe an interdependent and transnational community. The European Union should be a mutual and crucial project to enhance the cooperation among the countries of the continent. The European Union must be a community based on mutual respect, transparency, and prosperity.

We believe there is no better way to ensure European values than the enlargement of the EU. Welcoming the candidate countries to the EU will only strengthen the union, and bring more stability, security as well as prosperity to member states and Europe as a whole. A similar investment in Europe's security and prosperity was already made during the previous enlargements of UE that contributed to the consolidation of democracy and EU values in Eastern Europe and had positive economic effects in both new and old EU countries. Moreover, reactions of

European institutions and governments of Western countries to the actions of governments of other countries striving to limit democracy or violate human rights should be much stronger and faster. The overthrow of authoritarian regimes of Eastern Europe requires more commitment and effort on the part of the EU.

Fighting Russian imperialism

- Speeding up and increasing military aid: the weapons, ammunition and military equipment to ensure Ukrainian victory against Russian aggression.
- Prosecuting war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law under the international criminal tribunals.
- Introducing stronger sanctions against European companies still operating in Russia, with the aim of making them fined into bankruptcy. This applies primarily to companies that still export machining equipment, parts & expendables necessary to produce ammunition and military equipment.
- Officially recognizing Russia as a terrorist state by EU by putting it on the list of terrorist organisations in Council Regulation (EC) on specific restrictive measures directed against certain persons and entities with a view to combating terrorism and execute all the sanctions in that regulation, as well as terminating any cooperation with Russia in the international organisations and bodies.
- Stronger sanctions in all the policy areas, as implementation of ban on Russian fossil fuels, including LNG, LPG or pipeline gas, as well as agri-food products, and stronger implementation of existing sanctions.
- Stronger counteraction to the Russian disinformation and destabilization actions, and pro-Russian narratives in traditional and digital media.
- Confiscation and allocation to aid to Ukraine of frozen Russian funds.

In CDN, we aim to see an Eastern Europe (and a world) shaped by international collaboration and solidarity, not authoritarian imperialism and brutality. We believe that Russia, the terrorist state, is the main danger for this project, as well as to the whole European security. For decades, Russia ignites armed conflicts against the independent, neighbouring countries. This includes full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, invasion in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine in 2014 and aggressions towards Moldova in 1992 and Georgia in 1992-93 and 2014, and outgoing occupation of part of their territories. In other Eastern European countries, Russia is using its political and financial power to increase its political influence and spread disinformation and propaganda. Moreover, Russia makes systematic efforts to undermine democracy in the world, led the genocidal intervention in Syria, and committed war crimes in Mali and Central African Republic.

CDN expresses support for the people of Ukraine in their fight for people's lives, democratic future of their country and Europe, and against the fascist regime of Russia. We want Europe to stop focusing on the imperial power and

listen to people from Ukraine, as their demands about what is needed for victory should be the core of our narrative.

Fighting neocolonialism

- Recognizing the presence of other neo-colonialist powers that have strong presence in the Eastern Europe and directly and indirectly influence the politics of the region
- Fighting for the freedom from these neo-colonialist tendencies and establishing independence of the states while promoting the European unity
- Continuing the fight against any current and future neo-colonialist tendencies that by economy, culture, media and other forces try to destabilise countries in the region making them less independent

We recognize that beside the direct military aggression Eastern Europe (but also Europe as a whole) is under influence and direct threat of other global powers and their neocolonial influence. Neocolonialism means that in the contemporary world there is new form of colonial power that implies economic, cultural, political and media influence over other countries that should be independent. These independent countries are sometimes those which were, in the past, colonised by these powers, but also can be any of the developing countries, which puts most of the Eastern European countries in this position.

Beside direct military aggression, Russia has performed process of the neocolonialism for many years and continues to do so in the region, adding up to political destabilisation in these countries (including, but not limited to Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Serbia etc.).

However, we must recognize the neocolonial processes that are more subtle, such as those performed by China and USA. China has direct economic interest in the region, investing billions in various projects, especially infrastructure, and populating its production of everyday goods. They have already practically bought parts of the land with these investments (such as Piraeus port in Greece) and are involved in various shady construction projects (two Chinese companies were involved in the reconstruction of railway station in Novi Sad, Serbia, which collapsed killig 15 people). Chinese facial-recognition surveillance cameras are spreading fast, which poses direct threat to the privacy of people. All of this directly influences people of Eastern European countries, but also financially aids China greatly which, in turn, encourages them to continue their arm of human rights and freedoms the government is carrying out.

USA has also been long recognized as state using so called soft power for its colonialisation. While they haven't had a direct military involvement in the Eastern Europe since 90s, it is obvious their cultural colonialisation is influencing the whole world, which includes Eastern Europe. Majority of tech moguls and social media CEOs are operating in USA, dictating further the way internet, AI, and digital lives are constructed. With recent changes in American politics, we are already seeing further influence on ways various online platforms are preforming (Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok etc.) directly restricting political content and shaping algorithm in the more conservative direction. This will directly help out formerly mentioned authoritarian regimes

of the East, helping them in shaping their propaganda and restricting media freedom. Beside digital, there is also cultural monopoly of USA which, while considered to be so called soft colonialism, has huge influence on shaping ideas, and politics of people around the world, including Eastern European youth, presenting neoliberal capitalism ideas as the only ideal form of ideology. As we wish for greener future with sustainable resources and multi-cultural society, we want to advocate for more cultural self-governance and various cultural industries to have their space. There are also various influences of USA on investments and construction development of the region, which adds to their economic imperialism. All of this helps USA to be the dominant global power, financing their own military actions. As we are anti-militant, anti-colonial and anti-neoliberal organisation, we have to stand against the American hegemony in the Eastern European region.

CDN continues to oppose all forms of imperialism, both outright violent and those using "soft" powers such as economical, political, cultural and ideological means. This takes into accent mentioned big imperial forces, but also local colonial influences, including those which would develop in the future. We wish for better cooperation of states in the region, based on support and empowerment, rather than reliance on the global powers benefiting on Eastern European resources and destabilising region in order to continue the colonial domination.

The broad security policy

We believe that the end goal of the foreign policy that global affairs must be conducted in a spirit of peace, solidarity and fairness. However, in current reality there we need to build resilience against violent political actors that want to solve political conflicts by force. There is a need to work on the security policy to defend the European citizens, values and cultural and natural heritage.

Despite warnings from Eastern European countries about threats to European security, this topic for too long was neglected by European politicians, the best example of which is the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline. That needs to be changed radically!

We believe that the concept of security is at the intersection of diverse societal factors, and the effects of the interrelationship of security with various societal factors on policy decisions. Thus, there is of a complex security policy in various aspects, which we present in this chapter.

Energy security

- Transition to 100% renewables as the main method of increasing European security.
- Investing in common European energy grid that benefits everyone, with the aim of achieving European energy independence.
- Stopping the fossil fuels import from the authoritarian countries and implementing strict sanctions on the countries that are continuing to do so.
- Introducing on the EU level programmes of cheap export of energy technology to third countries to reduce their energy dependence on authoritarian countries.
- Stronger implementations of sanctions against Russia in the energy sector, including ban on transshipments of Russian LNG in EU ports and taking stronger measures against shadow fleet tanker holders.

Clean, renewable and safe energy should be the basis of the European energy security. Dependence on fossil fuels allows authoritarian regimes controlling them over the world to persist and commit crimes against their own citizens and incite wars on the other nations. Meanwhile, dispersed and democratic energy is not only cleaner and more environmentally friendly, but is also more resilient in the event of a threat of war or natural disaster. CDN stands for the Europe that is not relying on the export of fossil fuels from authoritarian countries, which energy transformation is just and democratic, and with connected grid that is benefitting everyone.

Environmental security

- Introducing the term of ecocide in the international law and implementing other policies defining and contributing to prosecute environmental crimes.
- Investing in the programmes of safe destruction of obsolete landmines and small-arms.
- Reducing consumption of meat (responsible for 14,5% of global greenhouse gas emissions), thus also contributing to reducing land use.
- Making countries follow the rule on punishing companies that are harming the environment and institutions having rules and tools how to punish in case the law is not respected.
- Obliging companies to support green transformation, for them to be greener in their operation, and financially support renewable energy and green infrastructure projects.
- Support to cities for green transformation (as green and blue engineering, heating transformation, renewable resources etc.).

Environment is often the silent victim of wars. Fossil fuels are used to operate military machines, vast fields and forests are burn, and environment is damaged by constructions of fortifications. According to Ecoaction data, the first two-years of Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine led to the damage worth over 28 billion Euro and over 175 million tons of CO2 emissions. Thus, crimes against environment needs to be seriously prosecuted by international bodies.

Environmental challenges recognize no borders. International cooperation is needed to protect the environmental heritage against both military and non-military threats and maintaining ecological equilibrium on a global scale.

Digital & Media Security

- Constant updates of legislations, standards for critical infrastructure, businesses, and government entities to safeguard against cyber-attacks.
- Stronger action against disinformation campaigns by authoritarian regimes.
- Creating well-coordinated incident response system that involves all relevant stakeholders and mechanisms for transparent reporting on cybersecurity incidents, ensuring that the public is informed about potential risks and government actions taken to address them.
- Prioritising the protection of critical infrastructure sectors, including energy, telecommunications, finance, and healthcare, with tailored cybersecurity measure for each sector to minimize vulnerabilities and ensure the continuous operation of essential services.
- Prioritising funding of research and development in cybersecurity technologies.
- Support to independent media.
- Prioritising the NGOs data safety, eg. by using open-source software.
- Clear laws regarding surveillance and data managing, limiting ways government and corporations can use the information about citizens.
- Limiting AI involvement and protection of copyright information that AI technologies can use.
- Following the regulations provided by GDP and continuing to develop the laws that will follow the development of the digital technologies in order to priorities human security and freedom.
- Complete ban on using AI technology as means of war force

Digital security threats are becoming more and more relevant in the recent past. Authoritarian governments, especially during times of war, exploit digital vulnerabilities to suppress and control their populations. Moreover, these regimes actively target democratic countries, attempting to compromise their digital infrastructure as a means of exerting influence. Disinformation campaigns, especially those sponsored by state actors as Russia, China and Iran,

are widely present in the digital space of our countries. There is no adequate legislation to protect against this, as well as against hacker attacks on critical infrastructure by these countries. The data security and widespread misinformation on digital platforms, especially TikTok, is a problem for the whole world that we need to defend ourselves from. The omnipresence of these threats makes it a daily reality for people worldwide, and yet, there remains a concerning lack of awareness regarding effective protective measures, both among the people and political organisations.

For the non-governmental organisations, digital security means data protection, but against methods to fight against internet shutdowns, i. e. deliberate network disruption and interference with internet access, and blocking of communications platforms, that is prevalent in authoritarian countries. We believe in power of the digital activism and call for shutdowns and censorship to stop.

Queer-feminist security policy

- Empowerment of girls, women, and marginalized groups as a key foreign policy objective.
- Integration of queer-feminist security policies into the broader political discourse.
- Tangible support and protection for vulnerable LGBTQ+ and women populations affected by conflicts.
- Developing intersectional policies that address intersecting security challenges comprehensively.
- Introduce mechanisms for female participation in peace negotiations.
- Obligation to introduce the gender issues and the recognition of women's and LGBTQIA+ rights in the peace negotiations agenda.
- Support to local feminist organisations.

Queer-feminist security policy means including intersectionality in the foreign and security policy, to ensure that it includes viewpoint of the most vulnerable people. We believe that inclusion of the feminist perspectives is vital for the international system to achieve a broader understanding of security in the face of the current challenges.

Voices of people facing insecurity and violence due to their sexual orientation or gender identity are too often neglected. Women's participation in peace processes is low and even decreasing and queer and gender issues are not included in most of their agendas (United Nations' Peace Talks in Focus 2023. Report on Trends and Scenarios). Hence, we need to emphasise the inclusion of queer and feminist voices in all the decision-making processes.

Responsibility to protect

- Full accountability through independent investigations into all potential violations of international law by all parties, especially all the countries to join the International Criminal Court and Rome Statute.
- Sanction export of materials necessary for military production, such as machine parts and expendables, to authoritarian countries, as well as serious sanctions leading to the bankruptcy of companies still operating in aggressor countries.
- Ban on arms export to aggressors, authoritarian states or countries that commit serious human rights violations, with stricter post-shipment and end-user controls.
- Reduce dependencies and de-risk from authoritarian regimes as China.
- Expand the understanding of security from an exclusively military perspective towards a more human-centred approach. Therefore, collective response must be not only revoked in case of military threats, but also humanitarian emergencies caused by numerous factors including climate crisis.
- Equipping international organisations such as UN with the mandate and tools to prevent conflicts and/or procedures to react in case the peace is being jeopardised.

We believe in the global political commitment to protect people against serious human rights abuses. We acknowledge that the international community is collectively responsible for ensuring peace, protection of human rights and environment, rule of law and democracy in every corner of the planet. We oppose all torture, the death penalty, arbitrary and groundless arrests, racism, slave labour, and discrimination worldwide. State sovereignty cannot be used anywhere as an excuse or permission for drastic violations of human rights.

The global community has failed in protecting the human rights against aggressions in recent years, in Eastern Europe by failing to adequately defend Ukraine against Russian aggression, Armenia against the atrocities committed by Azerbaijan, but also elsewhere in the world, not protecting, among others, Syrians and Palestinians. It fails in protecting the people fighting the regimes in Azerbaijan, Belarus and other countries in the world. CDN believes that the international community needs to finally take responsibility to protect seriously and support democratic forces around the globe and take responsibility to support countries with less capabilities to protect themselves from different threats not limited to the military.

Peacebuilding and reconciliation

- Promoting the work of youth-led peace-building initiatives, fight the economical, structural and policy barriers for young peace-buildings
- Promote inter-community and inter-generational dialogues between youth and adults to promote knowledge sharing and community support for youth-led peacebuilding initiatives.
- Increasing the women's participation in peace processes.
- Promoting the intercultural dialogue initiatives on interpersonal, interorganizational and intergovernmental levels (see: The need for intercultural dialogue chapter).
- Respect for everyone's right to self-determination, specifically the peaceful separation of countries who desire independence.
- International treaties on armed conflicts, such as the Geneva Convention, to be respected in all armed conflicts and that breaches of these treaties are severely punished.
- Complex reform of the United Nations, especially reform of the Security Council, with removing the right of veto and increasing global balance.
- Legal, financial and political strengthening of all UN agencies and programmes that support democracy, human rights, sustainable development, development and social policies, such as the ILO (International Labour Organization) and the UNDP (United Nations Development Policy Programme).

We want to build a strong and sustainable peace by strengthening tolerance, economic equality, environmental protection, respect of human rights and social security in all parts of the world. Thus, we believe that peacebuilding – as a process to promote positive peace by addressing the roots of conflict, preventing and mitigating all forms of violence, and fostering just and inclusive societies – is a necessity when the conflict ends to ensure the reconciliation and intercultural dialogue.

At the same time, we believe there can be no lasting peace while severe human rights abuses persist, and parties involved in the conflict must cease abuses and ensure access to justice and reparations for victims of human rights violations. Thus, the peacebuilding and reconciliation process cannot start when aggressor's forces are still in the country, as is in case with Russian army in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

International institutions supporting peace, especially United Nations, needs to undergo complex reform. WTO, IMF, European Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development or World Bank also should be reformed to better take into account human rights issues.

Green defence policy

Living in peace is a privilege that is not given to all the people in Eastern Europe. Ignoring defence policy, calls to disarmament or for dissolving the military not only failed in confrontation today's security challenges. These calls mostly were coming from the privileged Western countries and were usually combined with the neocolonial denial of agency of Eastern European's societies by the rich and safe West. We believe that democratic societies of Eastern Europe have the right to defend themselves and that this is reconcilable with green values.

There are countries in Eastern Europe that are authoritarian, militaristic and with imperialistic ambitions. We stand firmly against governments of their countries, considering all the activities against their armed forces as refusing conscription, acts of sabotage or burning military reports as the valuable form of resistance. Thus, the solutions proposed in this chapter refers only to the democratic countries.

Non-violence principle

- Expand the understanding of security from an exclusively military perspective towards a more human-centred approach. International community must react in case of military threats, but also massive human rights abuses, and humanitarian emergencies caused by numerous factors including climate crisis.

- Prioritising tackling the root causes of conflict, strengthening civilian conflict prevention, mediation, and reconciliation as well as crisis management beyond borders, including peacebuilding, peacekeeping, and enforcement.

- Support for the act of civic disobedience against democratic backsliding.

The non-violence principle means that no lasting solution to any conflict between individuals, social groups or states can be imposed by force. This means that Greens need to be vocal against the political actors trying to do it and vocal against military interventions, acts of aggression and aggressive acts of the government in any shape. When human rights are broken and political aims are achieved by violent means, we must stand against it, using compatible means, accepting that sometimes they need to be military. Hence, CDN advocates for Europe actively fighting for the human rights, proposing solidarity, education, development cooperation and protection from violence, oppression, and discrimination.

Priorities in the defence policy

- Clear recognition of democratically elected civilian authority over the army as the basis for the functioning of modern defense and any investment in army.

- Prioritise interoperability of armed forces, especially by prioritising common European equipment procurement programmes, with national & regional

strategies on acquisition of the new equipment to ensure capabilities to defend against current threats, especially in context of long-term replacing the weapons send to Ukraine

- Creating a single regional security space, by strengthening micro-regional multilateral corporations or projects as European Sky Shield Initiative.
- Presentation of army modernization programs in given countries, including the latest generation of weapons, such as drones and anti-air defence.
- Prioritise military support to countries being victim of aggression and under direct threat.
- People First approach: investment in training and personnel, increasing quality of housing, barracks, health- and family-care, prioritizing the purchase of new helmets, uniforms or night vision devices, and improving the talent management in the army.
- Eliminate of any instances of harassment or discrimination in the military.
- Prioritise of the domestic and European arms industry when procuring and modernise the equipment, with a complete ban on buying weapons from authoritarian countries.
- Increasing public involvement in defence by promoting the importance of civic defence and facilitating voluntary training opportunities (e.g. voluntary 28-day training for students).
- Creating military units dealing with cyber-security in the military dimension.

We believe that Europe needs to be ready to face today's threats – both physical and digital. While specific decisions on the exact division of military spending depends on individual countries and their international commitments, Europe need resillient and efficient defence, well-trained and equipped armies. We believe in increasing both quality of life of soldiers, and culture – the gender equality in military is needed and cases of discrimination should be combated vigorously.

While the deterrence of democratic Europe is essential for achieving long-lasting peace, we believe that acknowledging the current role of the defence policy should not lead to jeopardizing sustainability and peace-building.

Greening and democratising the army

- Programmes of joint procurement of equipment by European army, reducing the number of different types of weapons used by different European countries, simplifying supply chains and increasing interoperability.
- Greater cooperation between military and civilian industries in the exchange of energy-efficient technology, especially in construction and ground-support equipment.
- Investment in energy-efficient technology, e.g. using electric engines in frigates and installing underwater spoilers on patrol ships.
- Increasing the financing for remediation of conflict-related pollution, especially programmes of landmine clearance.
- Increasing cooperation of army with local governments, in terms of civic preparedness: promoting the first aid courses, adaptation of municipal buildings to serve as bomb shelters, protect the civilian population against natural and man-made disasters and paying more attention to taking into account the defence potential in the design of investments in order to ensure efficient operation of the economy in the event of a threat.
- Establishing strict rules on military uses of emerging and disruptive technologies.

Defence sector needs to be more democratically controlled, transparent and reduce it negative impact on the environment and climate. The army should contribute to building a resilient society by cooperating with and being as transparent as possible towards local governments and communities. Being in front of the technology race go together with maintaining the democratic values and human rights. We support establishing international principles of responsible use of emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs), as artificial intelligence, autonomous systems or human enhancement technologies, in cooperation with academia and civil society.

Defence sector cannot be exempted from environmental obligations. Greater defence integration and joint equipment purchasing will reduce costs and emissions. Technology collaboration will also support the creation of more energy-efficient equipment and construction. We must also oppose excessive destruction of valuable natural areas for military investments as is the case, eg. in Polish-Belarusian border. At the same time, we acknowledge that the resilient and deterrent Europe is a method of the climate change mitigation – the environmental cost of the war in Ukraine far exceeds the emissions of all European armies.

Migration

Both voluntary and involuntary migration has increased in recent years due to various factors – it is one of the most pressing matters of our age. Economic uncertainty, armed conflicts and climate change are all driving people away from their homelands in search of a safer existence.

We strive to create a world in which no person is considered illegal, where people are not forced to leave their homes, and where societies show solidarity with all people seeking refuge. Not only does diversity boost the economy and innovation, but a diverse and culturally rich society is a strong one. We believe that freedom of movement is the right of every human being.

Freedom of movement as human right

- The abolishment of visa regimes that obstruct the free movement of people between Eastern European countries and the EU and stronger emphasis on the efficient and lawful work of border guards.
- Easing naturalisation procedures.
- Increasing availability and accessibility of institutions that facilitate integration of migrants by providing language courses, education, legal help or intercultural exchange.
- The right to vote in the local government election for citizens of other countries who reside more than 3 years in a given country.
- Signing and implementing the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families by all the countries.
- Increasing the powers of labour inspection bodies in European countries to protect the rights of migrant workers.

We support human-rights based approach to migration instead of treating it as a security concern. While the intersectional policies inclusive towards migrants needs to be implemented in specific countries in various kinds of policies (See: Social Rights chapter), international agreements on migrations needs to be changed. The implementation of conventions and agreements regarding migrants' and refugees' rights on European level, with eg. existing illegal pushbacks or migration deals, is far from accurate. Other treaties as Migrant Workers Convention needs to be signed and ratified by majority of European countries. The documents themselves, as EU's Dublin Regulation, needs to be amended to be more inclusive and supporting towards integration.

Refugees' rights

- Establishing a right to asylum in all countries and the abolishment of the concept of illegal persons.
- Creating safe migration routes, primarily by restoring the right to seek asylum in EU embassies, conducting rescue operations at sea and ending anti-immigration cooperation with countries that restrict human rights.
- Respecting the international agreements guaranteeing the basic human rights of refugees and asylum seekers (regardless of their official legal status), especially by stopping illegal practices as pushbacks.
- End all financial, legal and practical obstacles to the right to reunite with one's family.
- Reform of the Dublin system to facilitate the integration of asylum seekers right to choose a country if there are serious grounds for easier integration in a country other than the border country that first examines the asylum application (language skills, family contacts, etc.).
- Ending the EU-Turkey migration deal and stopping introducing similar ones in the future.
- Stronger measures against transnational repression by authoritarian regimes.

The global refugee situation in the recent years reshaped the political landscape in Europe and beyond its borders, reshuffled the power distributions within the political structures, but also set a new tone in everyday political debate, which has never been so hateful and actively used to disempower and marginalise those who are already suffering. It also revealed acceptance and willingness, and overwhelming cases of solidarity with refugees. Hence, we believe that European society is ready for a radical transformation into an open, compassionate one, which doesn't leave people in need behind.

We understand that we all bear the responsibility of providing a safe environment and a fair asylum system for the people fleeing conflict, hunger and oppression. We condemn any form of human trafficking, human rights violation and abuse of power by authorities regarding refugees. Europe needs also immediately stop deportations to authoritarian countries and take stronger action against harassment, surveillance and threats to activists from countries as China and Iran living in Europe.

Global Green Deal

We strongly believe that the social change we envision can only be achieved through cooperation at the global level aimed at reaching sustainable solutions. We call for the countries that have the most access to the wealth to assume responsibility for their historical behaviour and act to lower the difference with the majority of countries, which have suffered and still suffer from

exploitation. A fairer and more equal world, with a more balanced distribution of goods and resources, is better for everyone.

Thus, we believe that there is need for the Global Green Deal: the complex programme for the global justice, manifesting in real actions not just words, based on the principles of equal cooperation and sustainable development.

Decolonisation in the world

- Decolonial and anti-racist perspective to be introduced in all the cooperation and development policies, and in development assistance planning.
- Art restitution debate with the long-term aim of returning artifacts currently exhibited and kept in European museums.
- Accountability of colonizers and symbolic and material reparations to former colonies. In particular, the European countries need to recognize its role in contributing to placing the Global South at the front line of the climate crisis and provide more international climate finance for mitigation and adaptation.
- Increasing spending on climate action in low-income countries, making just transition a joint effort.
- Introducing of programmes of debt forgiveness for countries that make steps towards democracy and human rights and implement Paris Agreement.
- Decolonisation of participation in democratic structures, especially by fair representation for the Global South in UN Security Council and in international financial institutions.

Colonialism and its legacy are still affecting the international relations, trade deals, multilateral institutions etc., causing global inequality and contributing to climate crisis and security threats. Europe should decolonise its external actions and not put European interests or those of European companies over and above those of its partners. CDN believes that decolonisation is the first necessary step for the global justice for all.

Global just transition

- Increasing the development aid to at least 0,7% of GDP for all countries, and at least 1% in the EU countries. It should be directed towards priorities as public and social services or decarbonization, with increasing funding to grassroots civil society in Global South, and with

total stop of tying (that needs to be spent in the countries that provide aid) international aid and assistance to migration deals.

- Recognizing the reducing of the emissions, switching to net-zero technologies, and ending ecological degradation, as well as promoting democracy and social rights as the aims of global trade.
- Trade agreements to not undermine local production and environment, additional assessments about human rights, especially gender perspective, biodiversity and animal welfare must be introduced.
- Accountability for the companies upholding these standards on diligence, deforestation, and forced-labour-free supply chains and paying fair taxes.
- "People and planet" approach in raw material extraction protecting the rights of local communities, biodiversity, and introduction of collective European purchasing strategy and cooperation for rare-earth elements.
- Ending the world hunger, implementation of the global right to food and creating sustainable and resilient plant-based global food system.
- Rebalancing the global system of intellectual property rights to ensure the Global South can access key technologies, especially for decarbonisation and healthcare.
- Stopping waste dumping to other countries by adopting clear end-of-waste criteria at the European level, such as for plastics and textiles to avoid the classification of waste as second-hand goods.
- Stop of export of the chemicals not allowed in EU, as pesticides, to other countries.
- Banning the arms export to authoritarian and aggressor countries.

CDN believes that every country needs to benefit from the just transition, and that human rights and economic prosperity cannot be reserved just for the worlds' richest or relatively rich regions. Unfortunately, trade agreements imposed by Western countries and companies based or operating in Europe too often hinder the enacting of social and environmental policies in the countries of global south. We need to change global economy regulations, so they promote peace, prosperity, and sustainability.

At the same time, we believe that good governance, democratic norms and institutions are vital elements of global justice. Thus, promoting of the human rights, peace and democracy should be is the necessary part of the Global Green Deal.