

Austrian People's Party

THE NEW PARTY PROGRAMME

Preface

Some generations are born to innovate. Others have the vocation to preserve existing institutions and achievements. In view of the enormous changes of recent years - such as the profound political transformation of Eastern Europe in 1989 - one thing has become clear to me: our generation cannot but innovate.

The way in which we deal with each other, our means of communication, the values and convictions underlying our communities have been most profoundly affected by these changes.

It is our political goal to preserve the worthwhile achievements of past developments. Hence, the Austrian People's Party is at the forefront of the necessary changes. We want to be able to determine the pace and the direction of these changes. This is why we have engaged in a serious and well-founded process of reflection to elaborate a new Party Programme.

Strengthened through a clear political orientation, we are ready to take up the new challenges of our community on the threshold to the 21st century.

We invite all citizens to join us on the path of change into a promising future for our country, for Austria.

Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel
Federal Party Chairman

Preamble

We, the Delegates to the Federal Party Conference of the Austrian People's Party, held on 22nd April, 1995, herewith adopt this Party Programme in the conviction that Austria, in a new era faced with important new tasks, needs a strong People's Party willing to assume the responsibility for these tasks.

We herewith reaffirm our political determination to lead the way in the development of Austria. On this basis, we will be working for our country on the local, regional and federal levels, create a secure and united Europe, and assume our responsibility in the world.

This Party Programme is based on our model of a free society, built in a spirit of partnership, which we have successfully upheld since 1945. Competing with other notions of social order, these fundamental values have held their own and prevailed over inhumane capitalism as well as levelling class struggle. Thus, our ideas of a socially just society have become the model for the third millennium.

The view of the human being and the vision of social justice reflected in the new Party Programme are based on Christian social doctrine. Our understanding of the Constitution and of fundamental rights as well as our economic policy are based on the liberal concept of an open society. Our value system is rooted in the Christian and humanistic tradition of Europe.

Through its past programmes, the People's Party has contributed most successfully to the development of Austria and the establishment of an efficient market economy. On the basis of the new Party Programme, we will implement the eco-social market economy in our own country and in Europe. We will make our contribution to social and political stability, always emphasising those values of society which allow our citizens to lead happy lives as members of the community.

Vienna, 22 April, 1995

PART 1

Our Identity

Who are we ?

We are the Christian-Democratic Party

The principles governing our approach to society and politics are based on the Christian commitment to the dignity of the human being. Our political action is oriented towards the individual and his/her role in the community. We are guided by the principles of charity, justice, freedom and tolerance. We work for peace and for the preservation of the Creation. We are open to Christians and to all those committed to these values for other reasons. We are not bound to any denomination or church institution.

We derive our social vocation from our ideas of social justice in a society based on the sharing of burdens and risks. We emphasise the individual's personal responsibility. Hence, any help given to individuals must enable them to help themselves. In the fight against poverty and social disadvantages, the responsibility of the State is substantial, but not exclusive. With this in mind, we want to create social networks through communities that provide the necessary degree of security to the individual. Poverty - above all in a society of affluence - is a particular political challenge for us.

The imperfections of human beings and their limited conceptual abilities also limit the scope of political action. This understanding guards us against ideological extremism and a totalitarian view of politics.

We are the party that stands for the liberal state under the rule of law and the open society

We stand up for the freedom of the individual and the promotion and recognition of personal achievement. We want to restrict the power of the State and the public administration to the necessary minimum. Protecting and defending the fundamental personal and political rights and freedoms as well as private property is a matter of central importance to us. However, the freedom of the individual is inconceivable without responsibility.

We are committed to parliamentary democracy, which is based on the liberal state under the rule of law, the existence of political parties, self-governing bodies in the form of chambers and associations representing economic and social interests, and the direct democratic participation of the citizens in

important issues. A democratic party structure and the active involvement of our party members in the democratic decision-making process are principles we feel bound to observe.

We regard the freedom of choice of life-styles as a prerequisite for an open society. It is the manifestation of the diversity of opinions, of cultural expressions, of the needs and interests of the citizens and, thus, the basis for tolerance and change. Flexibility in the design of one's living conditions is essential, if human beings are to lead happy lives.

We are the party that stands for the eco-social market economy

We consider it our mission to preserve and save the natural bases of life on earth. We want to keep our planet inhabitable and fertile for our children. The generations coming after us must be able to live in human dignity in a healthy environment.

The eco-social market economy is the economic system designed by us to meet the economic, social and ecological challenges of the future.

Private property and fair competition are the most important principles of the eco-social market economy. The political and economic order of the state must provide incentives for the individual to perform according to the best of his/her abilities. At the same time, care must be taken not to marginalise those who are excluded from the market in economic terms. Besides this social component, we uphold the ecological principle of sustainability, according to which our economic activities must not diminish the future prospects of coming generations and the regenerative power of Nature.

We are the party that stands for Austria in Europe

We have always stood up for Austria. For love of our home country, we have rejected any form of totalitarianism and dictatorship and achieved the economic, social and political reconstruction of our country as well as the restoration of its complete sovereignty.

We advocate the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of Austria, our home country. Through entrepreneurship, innovative courage and the promotion of cultural creativity we intend to create an image for our country that remains unmistakable now and in the future.

Our rich and varied cultural identity is an important contribution which we are making to Europe. The strength of European culture is due to its openness to the diversity of different cultural traditions. Our commitment to the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe includes the commitment to the

ethnic groups present in our country and the defence of minority rights also in other countries.

A united Europe will be the basis for peace and security on this continent. Hence, we want to create a democratic Europe based on the shared assumption of political responsibility. We advocate a new European security order in the creation of which we intend to take an active part.

The tasks to be fulfilled in Europe are to be shared meaningfully between the institutions of the European Union, its member states, and the länder, regions and local communities according to the principle of subsidiarity.

We are the People's Party

We are a people's party which brings together women and men from different parts of the country, different occupations and different age groups. As a socially integrative party, we serve as a platform of convergence for the various interests of the citizens and we try to bring about an equitable balance of interests with the well-being of all in mind.

We are committed to a political approach which is not limited to the pursuit of individual interests, but offers comprehensive answers to the problems and concerns of our society.

We are committed to a citizen-responsive approach at all levels - local, regional, national and European. Given the fact that many people experience political action most directly at the local level, we are in favour of strengthening the system of local self-government.

As a people's party, we are committed to the positions of the political centre, to a value-oriented political approach and a political practice aimed at solving problems on the basis of reason and factual considerations. Hence, we firmly oppose any extreme political positions and reject fundamentalism, intolerance and violence in whatever form.

In the full awareness of our responsibility for Austria, we hope to win the confidence of our fellow citizens through our programme and identity, and aspire to political leadership in Austria.

What do we want ?

We want to secure the personal freedom of the individual and provide incentives for personal achievement.

Providing the basis for the free development of the personality in the course of an autonomous life and protecting personal freedom are objectives of high priority for us. The abilities of each and every human being must be developed to the greatest extent possible, rather than hindered through an excess of bureaucracy and regulation.

We want to promote the family as the nucleus of society.

Those assuming responsibility for a family and children serve society as a whole and deserve its support. The acceptance of family obligations must not result in disadvantages for women and men.

We want to strengthen the feeling of responsibility for the community.

To combat the contemporary trends towards extreme selfishness and declining solidarity, we call upon the citizens to assume their share of responsibility vis-à-vis the community as a prerequisite for the living development of democracy and society.

We want to assume our responsibility vis-à-vis the Creation and the generations coming after us.

A sustainable, sparing use of our natural resources is essential to secure a sound basis of life for those coming after us. Ethical principles must be applied in the practical implementation of scientific and technological findings.

We want to maintain and improve Austria's economic performance.

A sound economy is one of the most important prerequisites for prosperity and well-being in the country. Without maintaining its international competitiveness through a balanced coexistence of small, medium-sized and large enterprises, Austria will not be able to meet its obligation of ensuring social justice - neither in relation to its own people not to the international community.

We want a society guided by a system of durable values.

Virtues such as decency, honesty, thrift, courage, diligence, the willingness to assume responsibility and reliability should govern our relations with each other and must be strengthened through the provision of appropriate models. Hence, we expect the office-holders of our Party, in particular, to live by these principles.

We want to enhance the citizens' confidence in the democratic institutions of the State.

Democratic institutions depend on the confidence of the citizens, which they have to win over and over again. We want to build such confidence by securing the functioning of political institutions and the credibility of political office-holders. We will not tire in inviting the citizens to participate and to work with us.

We want to put the taxpayer's money to good use.

The citizens have every right to demand a conscientious and careful use of their tax money. An attitude of thrift - a matter of course in our private lives - must also govern the way in which money is spent in the public household.

We want to provide security to the citizens and make them feel at home in Austria through our policies.

We want to make sure that everybody feels safe and at home in our country. We want people to feel that they belong to Austria and we intend to preserve the country's intellectual, cultural and historical identity also in the years to come.

We want to meet future challenges through a policy of open-mindedness.

Many problems can only be solved at the international level. Therefore, our membership in the European Union and in international organisations is an essential prerequisite for the preservation and further development of our home country.

Our Principles

Our view of the human being

Our principles are based on the Christian and humanistic ideal, according to which the human being has a natural and unassailable right to life and development in freedom. The respect of human dignity is the very basis of our political action.

Through their creative abilities, their critical awareness and their responsible action, human beings have an inalienable claim to freedom, self-determination and participation in society. We want to work for the universal respect of human rights.

To develop their personalities fully, human beings need the company of others. The human being forms part of communities for which he/she assumes a share of personal responsibility. The inviolable rights of the individual are limited by the obligation to participate constructively in the development of the common weal. The exclusive pursuit of selfish interests destroys the foundations of democratic self-determination and endangers the common weal.

The human being, as part of the Creation, is inseparably associated with nature. Whatever lives, is dependent on other living beings and constitutes a value in itself. It is from this understanding that we derive our obligation to use the resources of nature sparingly and our responsibility for the preservation of the Creation.

We recognise that the meaning of human endeavour goes beyond things material. We are committed to a holistic view of the world and mankind: besides social, political and economic dimensions, there are cultural, ethical and religious dimensions to the human being, which need to be reflected in our political action.

Freedom

Every human being has the natural right to be recognised as a free, responsible individual. For us, freedom is equivalent to self-determination based on the individual's conscience and reason. On account of their freedom, human beings are responsible for their own actions.

Personal development within the framework of society and the state is only possible in freedom. The democratic state under the rule of law posits the freedom of the individual. It is the task of politics to secure and protect the necessary margin of freedom for every individual.

Freedom in the community can only be achieved through the assumption of responsibility for others. While asserting his/her own claim to freedom, the human being must recognise the freedom of others. One individual's freedom is limited by the freedom of other individuals.

For the individual to live in human dignity, he/she must be protected against state interference to the greatest possible extent. We support the consolidation and continuous renewal of the fundamental rights and freedoms. If freedom appears to be endangered by technological advances, corrective measures must be taken in due time.

We reject any form of state tutelage and unnecessary state control.

Responsibility

According to our view of the human being, every individual is personally responsible for his/her actions. However, the individual is also responsible for his/her fellow beings and for the state community.

We will not be able to solve the future problems of modern society, unless individuals assume their share of responsibility in the private sphere and in the world of work, as citizens and as politicians. Political action must promote the assumption and exercise of responsibility and counteract any tendency to shift responsibility to anonymous institutions.

Sustainability

We bear responsibility not only for ourselves and our fellow citizens, but also for the survival of mankind as a whole. We therefore consider it our duty to orient our own political and economic action towards preserving adequate opportunities for future generations.

Our yardstick is the principle of sustainability, which implies a mode of behaviour that meets present-day requirements without diminishing the prospects for future development.

From our mission to shape and develop the world we derive the ethical duty to be moderate and to exercise self-discipline and self-restraint. Making use of the resources of nature must not weaken the regenerative potential of nature.

Justice

All human beings are equal in their right and their dignity. However, they are unequal as regards their talents, abilities, inclinations and interests. Justice does not mean giving "everybody the same", but making sure that everybody gets what is "best suited" for him/her. We are aiming at equal opportunities for every human being to develop according to his/her specific characteristics.

Justice also means that all human beings have equal access to the law, that the same treatment is applied to the same circumstances and different treatment to different circumstances.

Justice aims at the most equitable distribution of opportunities possible, at open access to education, to goods, services and property, and to participation and shared responsibility. Justice presupposes the recognition of personal achievement and social compensation for those who, for reasons beyond their own control, are unable to compete.

We stand for a just, peaceful and democratic world order, which is to secure a fair share in the goods of the world for all its inhabitants and an existence in human dignity for all.

Achievement

The achievements of a human being are part of his/her personal development. They are the prerequisites for the fulfilment of common tasks and the basis of any human progress.

An achievement-oriented approach and the willingness to assume entrepreneurial risks should be promoted. Individual achievement in the family, in society, politics, the business community and culture is to be the yardstick for the distribution of earned income within the framework of the market economy and for occupational and social advancement.

Human dignity remains unaffected by the human being's achievements. Those unable or no longer able to support themselves through individual achieve-

ment have a right to demand assistance. Nobody must be forced to go beyond the limits of his/her abilities. After all, the human personality develops also in phases of recreation, enjoyment of the arts, and entertainment in sports and at play.

Security

Life in freedom is possible only within the framework of a legal order the individual can rely on. It is the task of the state to contain conflicts and to secure political as well as social stability.

Security demands a framework within which human beings can plan their future. This framework includes the internal and external security of the State, the protection of life, freedom and property, security in old age and in periods of disease and social need, but it also ensures an unimpaired development in elementary spheres of personal and social life, such as education and training, culture and religion.

We are committed to the principle of increased legal certainty and reject any attempt to continuously change the legal framework.

We are committed to a sound system of social security, the financing of which must be guaranteed on a long-term basis.

The security functions of the State must be fulfilled in the service of freedom and justice.

Partnership

We are committed to a society based on the principle of partnership, in which emerging conflicts and clashes of interests can be resolved peacefully in a spirit of mutual respect, the willingness to engage in a dialogue and the recognition of shared values.

Our society is characterised by a diversity of attitudes, interests and groups. This diversity is bound to lead to contradictions and conflicts. Within the framework of the system of social partnership, statutory chambers and associations contribute substantially to conflict resolution in a spirit of partnership.

We advocate implementation of the partnership principle in all spheres of life, in human relations, in marriage and the family, in the business community and the world of work, in politics and the public administration, and in the international community of states. Partnership plays a central role in marriage and in family life between parents and their children.

Partnership requires the elimination of unreasonable systems of superiority and subordination, unjustified claims for domination, and inequalities in access to employment and opportunities in life.

Partnership in the personal sphere means that women and men respect each other's intrinsic values, are responsible for each other and agree on an equitable sharing of tasks within and outside the family. We want to eliminate any disadvantages for women in the family, the world of work, in politics and in all other walks of life. Equal opportunities for women in politics are to be promoted through the introduction of a minimum quota of one third for elected offices.

Subsidiarity

We are committed to the principle of the division of tasks in a society based on partnership. Such a society does not rely solely on the State to solve its problems, but makes use of a variety of institutions.

It is only through such variety that life in freedom can be guaranteed. The individual and small communities are to be empowered to solve their problems in a spirit of individual responsibility wherever they are directly concerned. Thus, some of the burden is taken off the higher level of community and the State, which can then use its energy for the planning and implementation of tasks that are fulfilled more effectively at the state level.

Hence, the existing division of tasks has to be examined for its effectiveness and the State must be relieved of tasks than can be fulfilled as well or even better by other institutions of society.

We believe that the individual should expect the community to do only what he/she cannot do on his/her own.

Political life demands a clear division of tasks, from the local to the international level. The principle of federalism and local, provincial and regional self-government is getting more and more important, as the process of integration of states and peoples within the European Union progresses.

Participation

We want the citizens to participate in the political processes which have a direct bearing on their lives. Through the participation of the largest possible number of citizens, the advancement of democracy is promoted and its long-term stability increased.

We are committed to the system of representative democracy, i.e. representation of the people by freely elected deputies and democratic parties in the

parliaments at the various levels of the State. Procedures of direct democracy are to supplement this system.

A living democracy relies on the participation of the citizens in the public discourse and in the process of political decision-making. The quality of democracy is measured by the degree and the form of participation in the decision-making process and the system of checks and balances.

Feelings of responsibility, tolerance and critical evaluation are the necessary prerequisites for participation. Participation in the fulfilment of the tasks of society also demands a highly developed awareness of the responsibility for the interactions in society and the political system. If necessary, individual and local interests have to be given up in favour of securing the common weal.

The free availability of as much information as possible on the functioning of society and public access to the decisions taken are essential prerequisites for participation in the democratic process.

Tolerance

A democratic and pluralistic society depends on a fundamental consensus on shared values. We are committed to a differentiated, diverse and open society.

In a modern, pluralistic society, tolerance is essential in daily life - as an attitude of openness and empathy vis-à-vis our fellow human beings. Tolerance implies the acceptance of diverging opinions and a respect of different life-styles, intentions and convictions.

As tolerance is rooted in the dignity and freedom of the human being, it is also limited through the preservation of human dignity and freedom. Thus, human rights are the very measure of tolerance. The ethics of tolerance does not allow violations of humanity and human rights and, thus, differs profoundly from moral indifference and intolerance.

Coping with the diversity of a modern society demands a strong feeling of cultural identity on the part of the citizens. Tolerance does not demand self-negation, but the assertion of one's own identity, which contributes to the success of peaceful coexistence of the sexes, of different cultural, religious and social forms of life. Tolerance does not mean that all positions are of equal value or that all life-styles are to be granted the same measure of legal and state support.

PART 2

Our Positions

A Strong Democracy

The tasks of the State

We stand up for and defend our democratic state under the rule of law. It has to secure the fundamental rights and create the legal prerequisites for the free and unimpaired development of the individual in an open society. It has to guard the citizens against internal and external dangers, protect weak members of society and minorities, maintain the diversity of social forces and secure the preservation of the natural bases of life.

The rule of law is based on the principle of separation of powers, the independence of the courts and the lawfulness of the public administration and the system of jurisdiction.

The democratic state depends on the participation of its citizens, who have to be motivated again and again in suitable forms. Democratic commitment and a shared responsibility for the common weal are duties of which the citizens

cannot and will not be relieved. Voluntary activities are an indispensable contribution to the common weal and have to be promoted accordingly.

According to our point of view, citizens do not only have obligations, but also rights vis-à-vis the State. These include the right to be heard, the right to participation and to expedient decisions in all matters concerning them, the right to information and to the protection of their personal data. The citizens are entitled to expect a citizen-responsive attitude on the part of state institutions.

The State must continuously and critically revise, improve and modernise its organisational structures and always question the meaningfulness of its tasks. Whenever public tasks can be fulfilled as well or even better by private individuals or by independent contractors, such tasks should be ceded by the State. This applies, in particular, to economic activities performed by the State.

The State must not deprive its citizens of their autonomy, but has to create the necessary conditions and incentives for them to develop freely. The achievement principle also applies to the public administration, which is bound to use the taxpayers' money cost-effectively, economically and carefully.

A citizen-responsive state is dependent on a qualified civil service. The status of the independent career civil servant is a guarantor of the rule of law and of political stability.

The rule of law is jeopardised by legal provisions that are unclear and difficult to understand. In the development of our legal system, we therefore try to ensure the adoption of clear and simple regulations. Legal provisions have to be continuously examined for their appropriateness so as to counteract the trend towards over-regulation in all walks of life.

Parliamentary democracy

We are committed to the system of parliamentary democracy and the accountability of elected office-holders to their voters. Representative democracy has to be supplemented by suitable instruments of direct democracy. These are to be employed in the case of decisions of principle at the national level and in the case of issues of immediate concern to the citizen at the regional level.

Political parties are indispensable elements of a parliamentary democracy. It is their task to create political competition, to take up issues of concern to society, to contribute to the process of political decision-shaping, and to promote political education and stimulate the political interest of the young. These tasks justify an adequate support from public funds.

The Austrian democratic system has been extended by another level through membership in the European Union. We intend to work for a democratic development also within the European Union.

Self-government is a democratic institution of the state under the rule of law, the legitimacy of which has to be continuously reaffirmed. We advocate the system of self-government for chambers and associations as statutory bodies representing the interests of sectors and occupations. We regard the system of social partnership as an essential element permitting the resolution of conflicts in society in a spirit of partnership.

Federalism

The Austrian State emerged as an entity made up of its provinces. The Austrian identity is based on the identification of the citizens with their provinces.

The principle of the federal state has not been made obsolete through European integration, but - on the contrary - has become a fundamental element of state organisation. In a way, the present-day nation state is too small for the major problems and too big for the small problems. Hence, in parallel with the integration of the countries of Europe as a way of coping with the major problems confronting us, power and responsibilities are being decentralised to small units which are better able to meet certain concerns and fulfil certain tasks.

Federalism and local self-government must therefore remain the basic principles of our state. The distribution of power and responsibility over different levels secures freedom and creates a wider scope for democratic participation.

Federalism demands a modern and cost-saving distribution of responsibilities between the federal, provincial and local levels in accordance with contemporary tasks and possibilities, an appropriate system of financial equalisation, and a decisive involvement of the provinces in the national decision-shaping process.

Federalism implies not only the granting of rights, but also the assumption of duties, such as the costs following from political decisions. Federalism must not be abused as a pretext to delegate unwanted political or financial burdens to bodies with insufficient competencies.

The media

Independent media are indispensable components of the culture of a free, democratic society. By highlighting political subjects for the public debate and commenting critically on them, they themselves become a political factor.

As such, they have to recognise that the public expects media workers to have proper qualifications and exercise self-restraint.

Quality and diversity are the goals of a responsible media policy. To ensure the presence of a varied media landscape with independent media, excessive media concentration must be prevented through anti-trust measures.

In the field of radio and television, the coexistence of public-service broadcasters and private broadcasters should be possible within a well-structured framework. Serving as the electronic show-case of Austria, public-service broadcasting has a quality-oriented vocation in the dissemination of information and culture. It bears a special responsibility for the preservation of regional cultural identities.

We want to protect the privacy of the individual against any form of media intrusion.

State and Church

In our opinion, the longing of human beings for a transcendental foundation of the meaning of life, of Creation and history, constitutes a lasting justification for the existence and the activities of churches and religious communities.

Without being associated with a specific denomination or church institution, we recognise the significance of churches and religious communities which, through their teachings and their manifold activities in education and in social and charity institutions, should contribute essentially to the creation of a climate of mutual understanding, empathy and tolerance.

We are in favour of granting churches and religious communities sufficient scope for development within the framework of the Constitution, laws and agreements, and we advocate a religious education, including school-based religious instruction, for the young.

Security and the fight against crime

We intend to create a society in which everybody can move freely and feel safe. Life, freedom and property, the central objects of legal protection, need to be effectively safeguarded.

The State has the duty to implement the law in effective terms. The exercise of the state monopoly to the use of violence must be bound to the system of law and order. This does not imply an omnipotent state, but maximum safety for all citizens.

Violence and crime have to be combated consistently and effectively by all means available under the rule of law. Law enforcement bodies and the administration of justice must be equipped with the necessary instruments to fulfil these tasks. In the exercise of their functions, they depend on the citizens' support. Through their own behaviour, citizens assume their share of responsibility for internal peace.

We are in favour of fast and consistent prosecution of violations of the law. Legal proceedings drawn out over many years undermine the confidence of the citizen in the rule of law.

Violations of the law must entail punishment that is commensurate with the unlawful act committed. Penal law must take account of time-tested legal traditions as well as changing social developments and value perceptions.

The fight against drug abuse and drug-related crime is a special challenge for our security policy. We reject the legalisation of soft and hard drugs, since we do not wish to see any lowering of the threshold that keeps young people from experimenting with drugs. We advocate comprehensive and preventive information about drug-related risks at schools and a widening of the offer of therapy and care for otherwise incurable drug addicts.

The Eco-Social Market Economy

The fundamental values of the eco-social market economy

The values of the eco-social market economy are based on the principles of freedom, achievement, responsibility and solidarity. It combines individual achievement with social justice in society and a sparing use of the environment.

The eco-social market economy is characterised by the free choice of occupation, freedom of consumption and free competition in the market, freedom of decision for entrepreneurs and organised interests, as well as social justice and the sustainability of the action taken.

As a fundamental regulatory principle of the eco-social market economy, competition restricts the exercise of economic power vis-à-vis consumers and competitors and promotes achievement and innovation. Personal initiative and individual responsibility are best stimulated through market-economy mechanisms and incentives.

Except in rare cases, the State itself should not act as an entrepreneur; it should rather secure a sufficient level of competition, wherever it is in danger of being distorted, through appropriate anti-monopoly and anti-trust legislation as well as measures of structural adjustment.

Ownership of the means of production is the prerequisite for entrepreneurial initiative.

Private property guarantees personal freedom, but also creates obligations vis-à-vis the society. As many people as possible should have a chance to acquire property. Employee co-ownership schemes are an important element to widen the property base in a society.

The eco-social market economy intends to create social justice so as to secure social peace and economic stability. We want to provide a social safety net for risks which cannot be handled by the individual alone. All the measures taken are to strengthen individual responsibility as well as personal assistance and solidarity.

The system of social partnership, as a model of non-violent conflict resolution, is of special value for the maintenance of social peace as a prerequisite for overall economic success. Self-administration, industrial co-determination and the rate-setting authority of the chambers are essential elements of the social partnership.

Environmental policy is to be based on prevention and on the polluter-pays principle. For the market economy to be ecologically justifiable, the finite nature of raw materials and sources of energy must be recognised. At the same time, environmental and consequential costs must be clearly allocated; fiscal policy should reward sustainable economic measures and penalise the excessive consumption of energy and raw materials, if market instruments prove insufficient to this end. The objective is not to limit economic growth, but to improve its quality and to redefine some of the important parameters of the gross national product.

We support the elaboration of long-term national and international plans of action to improve the quality of the environment. The condition of nature and the environment is to be given greater consideration in aggregate economic statistics.

Austria as a business location

In view of the increasing globalisation of markets, the quality of Austria as a location for business and industry has to be continuously reaffirmed and upgraded.

Hence, investments have to be made, above all, in training, science and research; it is essential to promote new technologies, improve the infrastructure, and eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles. Flexible working hours, an efficient public administration, security and social peace are other important criteria by which to measure a desirable industrial location.

In view of the predominance of small and medium-sized enterprises in Austria, the middle class is the most important pillar of the Austrian economy. To safeguard its continued existence and to facilitate the establishment of new enterprises, equity formation needs to be promoted.

Creating employment

Work is an essential element of human dignity and personal development. We advocate the creation of an environment in which everybody can perceive work as a meaningful undertaking. The work performed by all members of the working-age population creates the prerequisites for the functioning of the economy and the social state.

We therefore devote the greatest possible effort to the creation of full employment. This is an economic-policy and social-policy objective the implementation of which has to be pursued with special vigour by both the State and the social partners.

The quality of Austrian labour, which is highly appreciated - and rightly so - at the international level, constitutes a major locational advantage. This high quality must be secured through the maintenance of the time-tested system of dual training at vocational schools and through in-plant apprenticeship.

We aim at the introduction of flexible work patterns designed to take some of the pressure off the labour market and reduce unemployment. An increased offer of qualified part-time jobs ought to make it easier for people to reconcile employment and family duties. However, we reject flexible work patterns that are imposed upon employees without consulting them.

An efficient job placement service is an essential component of a functioning labour market. Such a service should be provided by the State, but not be reserved to state-run organisations alone.

The State bears a special responsibility for groups of persons that are difficult to place in the labour market.

Fiscal, budgetary and monetary policy

Taxes and charges must be set in accordance with the principle of fiscal equity. An achievement-related system of taxation must not suffocate the

personal initiative and the motivation of the citizens. We are in favour of using the instrument of tax legislation also for the fulfilment of environmental goals, while advocating a lessening of the tax burden on labour. A continuous increase of the overall tax ratio is to be avoided.

Public debt narrows the scope of action for the State and places a burden on coming generations. Hence, an economical use of funds must be the foremost principle of a responsible and sustainability-oriented budgetary policy. Basically, preference is to be given to expenditure cuts over the opening up of new sources of revenue.

Stable money is an essential prerequisite for the prosperity of our people and the reputation of Austria as an industrial location. The fight against inflation, budget consolidation, continuous structural improvements and moderate costs must therefore be at the focus of economic action.

Within the framework of European Monetary Union, this policy of stable money becomes an obligation at the European level. Hence, we want Austria to participate in European Monetary Union together with those countries that are committed to the same consistent monetary policy.

Agriculture

It is our goal to preserve farm-based agriculture and forestry throughout Austria. We want to maintain a functioning rural area and secure the multi-functional tasks of family-based farming in the long run. Our objective is to ensure the production of high-quality food and raw materials, secure the bases of rural life, preserve and enhance the value of our landscape for cultivation and recreation, protect people against natural hazards, prevent the rural exodus and safeguard farm and non-farm employment in the rural area.

Agricultural production must continue to be the most important basis of farming income. Agriculture must be market-oriented and efforts have to be made to improve the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry, with due consideration given to sustainable environment-related measures.

Agricultural and forestry production provides the basis for all other services rendered by agriculture in the interest of society, above all in the field of environmental protection and landscape preservation. These services of agriculture and forestry have to be remunerated fairly and adequately.

On the basis of sustainable, quality- and competition-oriented production and the fair remuneration of other services, social security and the opportunity to participate in the general development of income and prosperity must be guaranteed for those working in agriculture and forestry.

With a view to securing employment and creating added value, the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry-based processing and marketing sectors has to be improved. Special attention has to be paid to quality - from production to processing to marketing. The supportive vocation of the co-operative sector will be gaining in importance, in both processing and distribution, under the liberalised competitive conditions of the future. Co-operative structures have to be adjusted to the new requirements of the market.

The range of combinations of income from and employment in agriculture and other sectors of the economy should be further extended. The new instruments of support available within the framework of EU regional and economic policy are to be used to this end. A special emphasis should be placed on programmes and measures in the fields of tourism, energy from biomass, infrastructural improvement, and job creation in the agricultural processing sector. Advanced communication technologies, permitting the decentralisation of the world of work, should be used in a well-targeted manner for the benefit of rural regions.

To master the problems of structural change in agriculture and forestry, of surplus production and environmental pollution, we have developed the political model of the eco-social agricultural policy. This policy, which we will also stand up for in the European Union, is based on efficient production, processing and marketing, social justice and an ecological orientation.

Energy policy

Economic activity without the use of energy is impossible. Together, the State and the economy must make every effort to secure a reliable, long-term supply of energy and raw materials for our economy.

An eco-social energy policy must be aimed at the efficient utilisation of energy. Environmentally safe and renewable sources of energy, which help to keep our import dependence as low as possible - water, biomass, solar and wind - are of special importance in this respect.

Renewable sources of energy will be competitive, if true costs are allocated to all sources of energy. This will require the taxation of fossil fuels.

Energy conservation efforts undertaken by each and every citizen facilitate the implementation of an eco-social energy policy.

Mobility and transport

Efficient transport routes are the indispensable arteries of the economy. The high investment needs in the transport sector can no longer be met from the public budget alone. Hence, possibilities of private funding have to be resorted to.

Competition between different means of transport, in conformity with market-economy principles, must be based on the economic costs of the traffic infrastructure, but also on the related environmental burden. Under these conditions, we advocate the free choice of transport modes.

At the international level, the use of production methods involving long transport distances is to be limited through true cost allocation. The traffic load on highly frequented transit routes is to be reduced in an effort of international co-operation to promote environmentally friendly means of transport.

We advocate the further development of all means of transport to make them safer and to reduce their levels of energy consumption and pollutant output.

To avoid unnecessary traffic and promote the best possible utilisation of public transport, efforts should be made through measures of regional planning to avoid excessive distances between the places where people work, live and shop.

New Social Contracts

Fundamental considerations

We base our considerations on a social order which allows the best possible development of the individual and in which the members of the community assume the obligation to share social tasks and burdens and distribute them fairly in the interest of the common weal.

Demographic developments, changing living conditions, the coexistence of old and new values, as well as changes of the economic framework and the international environment call for a new form of social balance.

New social contracts are to provide the basis for solidarity between the sexes, all age and occupational groups, all social strata as well as people of Austrian

and other nationalities. We take the voluntary agreement between partners of equal rights on their respective rights and duties to be an essential prerequisite. New social contracts must also take account of our long-term responsibility vis-à-vis future generations.

Solidarity must not be misunderstood to be the exclusive task of the State. The willingness of all citizens to assume social commitments in small groups and private institutions as well as voluntary communities is indispensable for the common weal. The state system of social security must therefore be supplemented by efforts - within reasonable limits - to provide for one's own needs.

Through political measures, the conditions have to be created to ensure social security and justice as well as social integration - while, at the same time, maintaining personal freedom of choice and the greatest possible degree of individual autonomy.

Women and men

It is our explicit objective to see women and men as partners of equal rights in the family, the world of work, and politics.

The new social contract between women and men hinges on the reassessment of paid employment and the fair redistribution of unpaid work in the family, the household, in education and nursing care.

Given the fact that paid work is an element of comprehensive self-fulfilment for both women and men, reconciling work and family duties should be made easier for both sexes through an appropriate political framework.

Special support and training schemes are to be provided for women to improve their career prospects and their chances of earning a decent wage. It is impossible for us to accept that women should earn less for the same kind of work, that the wage level should be lower in occupations with a high percentage of women, or that the number of unemployed women should be disproportionately high.

Equal opportunities for women and men in society must go hand in hand with equal opportunities for women in politics. This is to be achieved through a minimum quota of one third for public mandates and the creation of a political culture favourable to women.

Families

Marriage and the family, as a human being's closest relationships, are the institutions in which people's lives are most deeply rooted. They provide the basis for a free society. We want to protect, strengthen and promote them.

The family fulfils irreplaceable functions for the individual and the modern democratic state. The family constitutes the first level of socialisation and education, conveying a sense of individuality and togetherness, a whole value system. It is a subjective and objective component of the social order and it corresponds to the longings and desires of the majority of human beings.

The two-parent family is our model. This family pattern has proved its value and has been primarily responsible for the raising of children.

Our political approach is not blind to the fact that changing life prospects and requirements in modern society have led to the emergence of new and many-faceted family situations, such as single-parent families, remarriage, families with children from different marriages, and children from unmarried partnerships. We take these patterns of life into account in our policies and intend to take the necessary measures to support those concerned.

Family policy has to create the conditions and provide the freedom of choice for women, men and children to fulfil their longings for life in a family and a partnership. To this end, we need a new perception of family culture. It will take comprehensive changes in the organisation of the world of work to create the necessary equilibrium between family and work.

State-financed family benefits are to offset some of the burden assumed by those who raise children and/or look after the elderly. As a matter of principle, benefits paid by the state are to be of a subsidiary nature.

The assumption of family duties must be taken into consideration by public schemes designed to protect against risks and provide for old age. If men or women opt for the comprehensive fulfilment of family tasks instead of paid employment, this must be duly acknowledged by society.

Interactions between family life and the world of work should be such as to facilitate the reconciliation of both by mothers and fathers and to permit flexible transitions from one to the other. Offers of high-quality child care by a variety of institutions, designed to meet the needs of children and parents, contribute substantially to the achievement of the above. However, the fact remains that this will not replace the intensive web of relationships in the family, but only supplement and enrich it for the benefit of the socialisation of the child.

Besides the world of work, housing, traffic and educational policy also have a strong impact on opportunities for families. The provision of a satisfactory

infrastructure for housing estates and urban districts, their link-up to public transport, and family-friendly dwellings guarantee, to a large extent, the functioning and humane coexistence of different generations.

Children, young people and the elderly

Children stand for life, imagination and renewal. Their well-being must be a primary concern of any society.

Children need to be sheltered, protected, and guided by values that are conveyed to them, primarily, by their mothers and fathers. Being firmly rooted in the family is the best prerequisite for a prosperous development of the child.

Like all other human beings, children have rights - human rights. Their respect presupposes that parents and children perceive themselves as partners and that children are raised in a non-violent environment.

Children need to be stimulated through education, but they must not be over-taxed. The State has to create favourable living conditions for children through the provision of educational, social, administrative and recreational facilities.

We consider young people to be our most important partners in the development of the society of future. We want to offer young people an atmosphere of freedom, full of incentives for independent development. Our ideal is a young person who is critically open to both the lasting values and the necessary changes.

Young people should autonomously design their own spheres of life, develop their problem-solving and conflict-resolution abilities, and participate in the evolution of society in an imaginative and tolerant manner.

We advocate youth work within and without the framework of associations, provided it serves the goal of personal development through education, sports and leisure-time activities.

Present-day policies have implications on tomorrow's living conditions. It is, not least, for this reason that young people have a right to participate in the decision-making process.

It is essential to develop a new model for old age, based on the notion of well-deserved retirement with a wide range of possibilities, enjoyment of free time and autonomous time management, undiminished possibilities of participation, and freely chosen activities, rather than on fear of disease and loneliness.

Quality of life for those more advanced in age includes suitable housing, supply of food, the necessary domestic services, nursing care, and a continued involvement in social, intellectual and cultural life. Neither the State nor the family alone can provide the whole range of services required by elderly people in need of nursing care.

The handicapped

In our view, human dignity is independent of achievement, age and state of health. A society that chooses to ignore its handicapped members deprives itself of its humane character.

Persons with disabilities belong to our society and, thus, have every right to be supported by society. They must not be regarded as objects in need of care, but as partners of equal rights. As a matter of course, the social state under the rule of law is obliged to promote the measures required to that end and to remove the remaining mechanisms of discrimination.

However, the special support of and assistance to the handicapped is not solely a task for state-run institutions, but falls within the sphere of responsibility of every individual and the community at large. Partnership, understanding and empathy, and solidarity should become a concern of all human beings.

Our policies must be aimed at helping and supporting the handicapped so that they can lead autonomous lives. Consistent integration in all walks of life is the only way to effectively counteract the isolation of handicapped persons. Hence, the State must take care within its own sphere of influence to ensure access for the handicapped on a comprehensive basis.

Foreign nationals

Through our policies, we want to guarantee the rights of all Austrians to their home country, their cultural identity and security. At the same time, we have to ensure understanding, respect and empathy vis-à-vis aliens and foreign nationals in our society. It will be impossible for every foreigner to be granted a right of residence in our country, but every foreigner, as a human being, does have the right to fair treatment and human dignity in Austria.

We want Austria to continue to fulfil its obligations as a country of asylum.

We want Austria to comply in good faith with the international and European legal standards granting rights of residence, establishment and participation to certain groups of foreign nationals. As a member of the international community, Austria, too, relies on its citizens being treated with respect and friendliness in foreign countries and being well received there.

It is inconceivable to grant unrestricted rights of immigration at the expense of the Austrian population. Not every foreigner wishing to reside in Austria can be granted the right of residence.

Through our policies, we want to make sure that the number of foreigners does not exceed the absorption capacity of the Austrian labour market, the school system and the local housing markets. The necessary procedures have to be complied with in full respect of human rights and the rule of law. Illegal immigration is to be combated and prevented by all means available under the rule of law.

As regards the employment of foreigners, preference should be given to those with a legal residence permit in Austria over others that have not yet moved to Austria but wish to do so.

The peaceful coexistence and the mutual respect of residents and foreigners is an essential basis for the functioning of modern societies in Europe. With this in mind, we advocate a policy of active integration of foreigners legally residing in Austria on a long-term basis.

However, the integration of foreigners living in Austria also presupposes the assumption of duties. The command of our language is as important a prerequisite for integration as compliance with the Constitution and the laws as well as the customs and practices of our society.

Social justice

It is part of the essence of a socially-oriented society to help those who are unable or inadequately equipped to help themselves. Modern social policy is confronted with the dichotomy of freedom and responsibility, of achievement and solidarity. The redistribution of tasks between public and private social responsibility is one of the major challenges for a social policy faced with a shortage of funds to finance ever more expensive social benefits. For wealth to be distributed, it first needs to be generated. As a matter of principle, providing for one's own needs is preferable to reliance on welfare.

We advocate an efficient and equitable social system which protects and supports those that are underprivileged and in need of assistance. Basically, there must be systems of solidarity for every citizen of our country to depend on.

The abuse of social institutions and services, which is both anti-social and contrary to the principle of solidarity, must be prosecuted accordingly.

Social services must be made available on the basis of clear, comprehensible and equitable criteria. They must be financially transparent for all people to

develop a proper cost consciousness. To those using the services of private social institutions, social-service vouchers ("civic cheques") are to be handed out by the State.

Social institutions should regard themselves as service providers and not claim the status of public authorities.

Social security includes training and further training as well as a socially balanced flexibility of work patterns and help to job seekers.

A society based on the principle of solidarity has to provide social security for those who are excluded from the world of work and therefore cannot provide for their own social security.

The traditional contract between the generations, underlying our system of old-age pensions, has to be adjusted to the foreseeable changes in the demographic structure. The range of choices between earlier retirement at a lower benefit level and later retirement at a higher benefit level should be widened. In the interest of the community at large, incentives should be created for people to opt for a higher retirement age.

Besides social justice in Austria, we also aim at a more equitable distribution of labour and wealth among the individual economies at the international level. Our policy must be geared to ensure improved access to the industrialised markets for the developing countries and press for a more equitable distribution of wealth in these countries. An increase of the minimum wage level and, consequently, the standard of living would allow millions of human beings in the developing countries to live in human dignity and, at the same time, protect producers in the industrialised countries against unfair competition through wage dumping.

Life and the environment

Protection of life

Human life - born and unborn - enjoys our unconditional respect.

We are in favour of family planning as an instrument of responsible parenthood and demand timely and comprehensive information and counselling on this subject. We reject the termination of unwanted pregnancies. Through political and social measures, conditions have to be created to avoid the termination of unwanted pregnancies. Advice and assistance to pregnant women in situations of conflict is the foundation of a credible policy aimed at the protection of unborn life. However, we do not consider penal prosecution of the women concerned to be an adequate solution.

Regardless of the enormous progress of medicine, our view of the human being also implies the respect of death. Human beings must be granted the right to die in human dignity in our country. The necessary conditions have to be created through adequate policy measures. Patients and their relatives must have the right to reject the use of medical technology in cases of incurable, terminal illness. We reject active euthanasia.

Health

Health is an elementary need of every human being. Access to medical care must be guaranteed for every human being, regardless of his/her financial situation, social status and place of residence.

Basically, health maintenance is within the individual's own sphere of responsibility. Incentives provided within the insurance system are to encourage people to look after their own health and adopt health-conscious life-styles.

We count on the advancement of medical knowledge in the fight against diseases as yet incurable. Alternative medicine, natural healing methods and organic remedies should be regarded as meaningfully supplementing the mainstream medical disciplines taught at the academic level.

Our health-care system should strengthen the individual's feeling of responsibility for his/her own health, extend patients' rights, create cost consciousness and introduce a stronger element of personal responsibility for avoidable, major and voluntarily assumed health risks.

The system of health care should also be organised according to the principle of the division of tasks (subsidiarity). Nursing care and treatment are to be provided in the patient's familiar environment as long as possible and the development of "health factories" out of proportion with the human measure should be counteracted.

Statutory health insurance is as indispensable as the free choice of physician and the exercise of the medical profession on a free-lance basis. Social-security institutions must be bound to operate cost-effectively.

Like any other technological innovation, genetic engineering presents us with great opportunities as well as risks. Narrow, ethically founded limits must be set to interference with the human germline. The allocation of jobs on the basis of genetic analyses is to be rejected.

Drug abuse must be combated with great vigour. We want drug abuse to be socially ostracised and advocate effective withdrawal measures. Controlled drug replacement programmes may help to contain drug-related crime. Persons tempted into drug abuse need to be helped, like any other victim of a disease. We demand severe punishment for drug traffickers.

At the same time, however, we must not overlook the fact that drug dependence is the consequence of an attempt to escape into an illusory world which will never lead to the desired fulfilment. A responsible society will have to try and overcome the causes of such escapist tendencies and create favourable conditions for people to lead satisfied and fulfilled lives.

Environmental protection and nature conservation

Nature and the environment are the basis for all human life and all generations. The objective of our policies must be not only to make use of nature, but to preserve it. Every human being has to contribute to the achievement of this goal.

We want to fulfil this obligation through a sustainable use of resources in all areas. To the extent possible, closed cycles are to be designed through the use of energy-saving, low-waste technologies.

A sustainable economy, based on working methods that take the needs of future generations into account, calls for a new approach in terms of system relationships. Any decision must also consider issues of environmental protection.

Austria's landscapes and natural spaces generate work and income. At the same time, they are home to many people who are take pride in their beauty. Preserving these landscapes is an obligation upon all Austrians.

Securing the basis for the lives of future generations is a task to be undertaken at the national, European and international levels. We are firmly opposed to the practice of eco-dumping in international trade.

The respect human beings owe to the Creation includes the respect of other living beings. Hence, the freedom to use animals to fulfil human needs also implies an obligation to keep animals under conditions designed to meet the specific requirements of the species concerned. The protection of animals and plants serves the preservation of bio-diversity.

The principle of prevention obliges us not to employ any technologies which we are not yet able to master without long-term harm to nature and the environment. Hence, we reject the utilisation of nuclear power for energy generation.

Housing

A responsible housing policy must be aimed at providing housing that is in keeping with human dignity for every citizen. Legislation intended to provide financial support for housing construction must ensure the effective use of funds in a manner that is socially targeted; repayment schemes must be designed in accordance with the individual possibilities and needs of the beneficiaries of state support.

Fiscal and capital-formation instruments, such as building-society saving schemes and the tax deductibility of debt servicing for housing loans, are essential to strengthen the ability of the individual to meet his/her own housing needs.

We advocate (a general legal claim to) the transfer of rented dwellings built by non-profit housing associations and local authorities into the ownership of the tenants. The capital thus raised should again be used for housing construction.

Tenancy law has a function of social protection. However, in view of the confusing proliferation of legal regulations and the rigidity of structures and privileges, a general revision of the existing legislation will be necessary.

Although valid tenancy agreements are not to be interfered with, the necessary adjustments should be made upon conclusion of new agreements. Thus, excessively low rents, partly dating back to the time before World War I, with their destructive effect on the housing stock concerned can be adjusted to modern requirements within the time span of one generation.

Leisure-Time and Sport

Free use of one's time is an expression of freedom. Leisure is one of the elementary needs in the life of human beings. Voluntary further education, recreation and entertainment, sport and games, insights into life and the joy of living enhanced by art and culture, pastimes and travelling add new

dimensions to everybody's life and contribute to the development of their personalities.

Politics must create the framework required to improve the quality of life in all these fields. Adult-education institutions, art, sports and communication of all kinds, vast outdoor spaces and recreational areas are to enable and support private initiatives.

Being an important tourist country, Austria must strive to meet the demand for an imaginative tourist programme that takes many individual interests into account while at the same time seeking to preserve nature and the environment. Quality is to take priority over quantity.

We stand up for the promotion of top performers in the arts and in sports because these people are role models furthering performance-oriented thinking in general. However, the results must also have a positive bearing on popular culture and mass sports, failing which a people would turn into a nation of armchair experts.

All those who offer leisure and sporting activities voluntarily and without seeking profit should be publicly commended. The recruitment and training of staff for associations active in this respect should be supported.

Sport is an important part of active public health policies. For this reason, investments in sports, especially when they are part of the school curriculum, are sound investments in the public health sector.

Education and Culture

Educational Perspectives

"Education" is a word that can be read on any sign pointing to the future. The unlimited civil right to education ensures comprehensive personal development in the family as well as in governmental and private educational institutions.

"Education" conveys to human beings a well-founded view of the world and a system of values which enable them to look at the world critically and to take responsible decisions, as well as to find a balance between personal happiness in life and the common weal.

The State must take care of value-based educational objectives, the creation of a legal framework for educational institutions, the financial resources and professionally trained teachers.

The diversity of people, which is reflected in different abilities, capacities and mother tongues, requires educational programmes to be adapted to this diversity.

The principle of performance orientation also applies to the educational process - albeit in individual and social respects. However, it must be linked with a structure of relations governed by the spirit of partnership in all educational institutions.

Educational institutions must correspond to the age groups they address, and they must be in sync with the times in linking general knowledge and occupational qualifications in such a way that occupational skill and the readiness for continued training come together in the task of life-long learning.

The growing complexity of all societal fields, the need for specialisation and division of labour on the job as well as the constant increase in information require that dynamic abilities and social attitude be specially promoted in life-long learning.

Education as a public responsibility can be taken on by governmental and private institutions. Competition between different educational institutions needs a system of binding and controllable quality standards. New types of financing (e.g. education vouchers) should be tested.

The educational system offered by the State must be based on the principles of subsidiarity, autonomy and efficiency. The focus is on the individual institution which is responsible for the organisation of its own scientific, pedagogical, financial and human resources.

Central and regional governmental institutions offer programmes of high quality and effectiveness in terms of educational policy, setting scientific and pedagogical standards, and by a transparent and just system of standard allocations for personnel and funding.

The greatest extent of equal opportunities possible is ensured by open access to educational institutions according to performance. The use of telecommunications increases chances in education.

Schools

The responsibility for education which parents have in the family, being the first place where a child finds a sense of belonging and community, must be strengthened.

Nursery schools and pre-school institutions are to support, complement and alleviate the burden of education in the family prior to compulsory school.

By offering a professional programme of education in a system that conveys a sense of community, schools fulfil an independent task which parents must support in the spirit of partnership.

Parents' and children's rights, which are guaranteed internationally, require that the choice of school options must be as wide and accessible as possible.

Dynamic abilities and key skills must be promoted by experiential learning in open, inter-disciplinary education which generates meaning and turns the future into a subject of study.

Syllabuses can therefore be trimmed in the future; they must be given core and extended objectives as well as orientation standards for the quality of school-leaving exams and admission qualifications. Thus, individual schools are independent in the way they shape school activities.

The cooperation of those who learn and those who teach will have to be designed according to the criteria for good schools and good schooling in the spirit of school autonomy. This also includes high ethical standards in the teaching profession, clarity of objectives and great expectations in terms of performance, adjusted methods and supervision of learning, bonds and cooperation, leadership and delegation, pedagogical profile and diversified life at school, and innovation as well as further teacher training.

The professional profile of teachers and senior functions in education must be redeveloped towards clear-cut objectives and modern professionalism so that education and training correspond to the requirements to be met by schools, with appointments to senior positions and special functions being based on quality-orientation.

Site-specific school developments are to strengthen the independent responsibility of partners in the school context for the organisation of what is pedagogically desirable and financially feasible and for the shaping of special school profiles. To ensure that school-leaving exams of various autonomous schools can be compared, general quality standards must be set and their maintenance must be guaranteed.

Schools will not only need libraries and infotheques to remain sites of education in the future; they will also have to shape the educational process with the help of the new communication media and prepare their pupils' ability to cope with these.

School architecture is to be designed as a kind of "built pedagogy" linking aesthetic and functional quality in such a way that ergonomically sound and hygienic working places and recreational spaces are created for teachers and pupils alike.

The ground for the further organisational development of schools will be prepared through experiences from the site-specific evolution of schools - schools as organisations of learning - and by experimental schools undergoing independent evaluation.

Universities and Higher Technical Colleges

Higher technical colleges are to extend the range of qualified professional training. Practical learning and fundamental scientific knowledge are to be imparted in a way close to the realities of business life. Organised according to the principles of subsidiarity, higher technical colleges are to be open to the widest possible circles of young people.

Universities must give their students an opportunity to obtain qualified scientific or artistic training by independent work.

For us, universities are the place where independence and freedom of research and teaching open up the entire world of cognition and language. For this to be done under the best possible conditions, universities should fulfil their tasks vis-à-vis society autonomously while ensuring democratic legitimisation in their internal decision-making processes.

Competition among universities is becoming ever stiffer in the European context. This requires from universities and academies to play an active role internationally, as well as to develop profiles that make them succeed in this competition. Austria must become an attractive base for science.

To attain this, it is necessary for the universities and academies to develop new capabilities. The capability of taking on responsibility: internal responsibility for the development of science and for the young by means of research and teaching, as well as external responsibility for considering themselves part of society and to open a dialogue. And the capability of finding solutions to the problems of humanity, thus influencing developments.

Further Training

Ongoing great changes in the world of work require to ever new qualifications. Initial training, at practical or academic level, can no longer guarantee success in the exercise of one's profession or an appropriate job. Thus, further occupational training is becoming ever more important. Labour market and educational system must be closely interlinked. This is also to

facilitate the reintegration of parents into the working life once the initial stages of founding a family are past.

Science and Technology

We are convinced that the services offered by the sciences are becoming ever more significant to the existential conditions of modern societies. They are inalienable for the maintenance and improvement of living conditions, for the education and further training of qualified up-and-coming professionals and for coping with the problems of our day and age.

For a small country such as Austria, well-trained women and men, state-of-the-art technology and researchers whose work corresponds to international standards, play a strategic role for the country's national economy among the industrialised nations.

The best investment which a state can make to enhance the prosperity and quality of life of its society lies in the support of its education and research system.

Due to the material and intellectual resources available, scientific and technological progress can only continue to develop internationally. The international networking of universities, the building of research networks and the participation in European research and industry programmes are prerequisites for innovative accomplishments that safeguard the international competitiveness of Austria.

We subscribe to the idea of progress in technology and science for a qualitative further development of society. However, progress must neither jeopardise the sustainable development of nature and chances for the lives of coming generations, nor must it violate human dignity.

New Media and Telecommunications

In view of the growing orientation of our economy towards technology and services, the transfer of messages is becoming ever more important. World-wide economic development has shown that the significance of know-how and information as productive factors and their conveyance through the instrument of telecommunications will increase.

We champion the idea of Austria linking up with European developments in telecommunications in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

The flow of information and know-how, networked world-wide, and their almost unrestricted availability make educational and cultural programmes widely accessible and thus improve the chances in life for wide circles of the

population. Moreover, the nations on our planet have an opportunity of giving others access to their cultural and intellectual accomplishments, thus contributing to understanding among the peoples.

The political framework is to make these information channels widely accessible to as to prevent the formation of a new two-class society.

Networking data bases from various fields of life comes with risks for the freedom of the individual. We want to protect the privacy of the individual and prevent the "glass citizen". We thus consider it a task of politics to use legal means in intervening wherever sole responsibility does not suffice to protect the individual.

Art and Culture

Art and culture should be an integral part of education, expanding our children's outlook and developing our cultural heritage. If Austria wants to secure its position as an important cultural nation, it must promote and call upon its valuable resources and talents.

An engagement with art and culture enhances the commitment of people to deal with themselves, with their environment and their roots. This is not only conducive to discourse and emancipatory in result, it also contributes to the shaping of one's own world, that which one calls home.

With this in mind, we champion cultural policies that are to guarantee free cultural development. Cultural policies are to accept and support the existing cultural pluralism as well as the momentum of resistance and persistence in artistic work and the way in which social conflicts are addressed.

Artists work for society, society needs the work of artists. Living culture thrives on value-based confrontation and criticism expressed in a spirit of mutual responsibility. Expenditure on culture is a meaningful investment in the creativity and innovative abilities of society.

Our culture shapes the identity of our country and her people. Culture is both tradition handed down in history and the living expression of our contemporaries. It unfolds in the most variegated forms and institutions, thus determining the way in which we coexist.

Coexistence within a greater Europe and an ever more integrated world forces us to engage in new cultural reflections. In terms of substance, it must be a significant goal of cultural policies to express the identity of Austria in Europe, to visualise the intellectual forces of our country.

Internationalisation, growing numbers of leisure-time activities and the mediatisation of society come with a risk of standardisation and the reduction of cultural sensitivity to mere entertainment value. In this context, more care and attention must be given to forms of expression that have mass appeal and generate identity, such as cinema, television and architecture.

We stand up for a notion of art that is not an isolated luxury article for ever new "cultural élites" but one that enables everyone to be a creator and recipient of art and that gives open access to our cultural heritage. Public funding of culture must take this into account by promoting great individual talents while advancing qualified mass participation which gives as many people as possible a chance to engage in a creative process.

Governmental funding of culture must not lead to dependent cultural workers. Funding of culture is not a task of the State alone. We want to support private sponsors and encourage them by tax incentives. Artists' private initiatives are indispensable for the vitality and diversity of the cultural sector.

At Home in Europe and The World

Austria and Europe

We champion a notion of Europe the unity of which is based on common values, common historical experiences and common value-based goals, as well as on the rich diversity of the various national and regional traditions of its peoples and ethnic groups.

Like the Christian Democrats who were the founders and promoters of European unity, we are convinced that the process of European integration is the most reliable safeguard that Europe is freed from the scourge of aggressive, war-mongering nationalism and chauvinism.

Europe is our heritage and command. Given the many ties between the peoples and nations on this continent, given two World Wars and the systematic mass extermination of human beings that started in Europe, we consider a European family of peoples to be a significant guarantee for peace in Europe and beyond.

We stand up for a continuation of the integration process, which has been mainly geared to economic integration so far, towards a political union which is based on the fundamental values of peace, democracy, human rights, state of law and an eco-social market economy. We want to contribute to shaping

such a union in the spirit of Christian humanism - in Austria, in the European People's Party and in the European Democratic Union.

The European Union is the institutional framework of European unity. It is also the natural focus wherein the hopes for the future of the Central and Eastern European countries converge. The European Union can and is to form the core of a comprehensive European order of peace.

We want the European Economic and Monetary Union to be translated into reality. We want to see the larger European Union develop and deepen so as to become a true political community, a European security community, as well as an environmental and social community.

In the same way in which we champion the deepening of the European Union, we also support its gradual enlargement by all those European states which subscribe to the fundamental goals of European unity and are at the same time able and willing to take on the rights and obligations of a EU member state.

We are of the opinion that Austria has special responsibility in respect of her neighbouring countries in Central and Eastern Europe. We will advocate the idea that these states will be involved in EU structures to the greatest extent possible prior to their accession to the EU. All people living in Europe are to be given a chance to join in shaping the future of our continent on the basis of equal opportunities.

As we are deeply convinced supporters of a federal order, we champion a European Union designed according to the structural principles of federalism and the division of tasks (subsidiarity), with a process of integration that involves regions and communities to a greater extent.

We want a European Union where human beings living in their local communities can feel at home and protected, where they can find intellectual orientation and moral ties. The people who live in this Union are to see themselves as citizens of their home region, of their home country and as Europeans.

European unity will only have lasting success if a clear majority of its citizens has trust in it. The politicians and institutions of the European Union always have to strive anew to win this trust. The extension of the democratic institutions of the EU as well as of the division of tasks among member states, regions and communities are prerequisites for strengthening this trust.

Austria brings a rich historical heritage and decades of experience as the third seat of the United Nations to the European Union. To us, the majority of votes which Austrians cast in favour of Europe in the popular referendum of June

12, 1994, is an instruction to make a strong Austria a self-confident partner in a common Europe of peace, security, justice and prosperity.

International Security

Among the tasks of our security policy, preserving the independence of Austria, the integrity of its national territory and ensuring peace in freedom for all Austrians has the highest priority. In a common Europe, the security of Austria is embedded in the more comprehensive security entity of Europe. The security of Europe is inseparable from our security. Austria, too, has to make an adequate contribution to the security of Europe.

The security of Austria depends on the quality of our own efforts and on the extent to which we succeed in using the stability-creating effect of European security systems for the benefit of Austria. Austria cannot assume that, if the worst comes to the worst, she will be defended by the members of a European security community while she contributes little or nothing to joint security. And it would actually be even more costly to defend oneself on one's own against any conceivable military aggression while waiving the security offered by an alliance.

Our European security strategy must be oriented on current challenges, threats and potentials. We champion a participation of Austria in the extension of an all-European security and defence system and we want Austria to be able to exert the strongest possible influence on related decisions.

However, the future security of Austria must also be defined within an international context. Therefore, we affirm the obligations related to and solidarity with the entire community of peoples and its security institutions. We support the participation of Austria in humanitarian, peace-keeping, peace-making and economic measures under such obligations.

The federal army must have the human resources and funding to fulfil its security-policy tasks. The defence system is not a political dogma or ideological principle for us. Military effectiveness must be the most decisive element.

A conversion of our defence system into a regular army will depend on the development of our geopolitical surroundings, the functioning of a European security system and the degree of Austria's integration therein. In any event, a militia system will be required to supplement the regular army. The principle of compulsory military service must in any case be kept up for as long as this is required in the interest of Austrian security.

The civilian service has important tasks to fulfil under the comprehensive national defence plan: however, it must remain an alternative service. We advocate the idea that female citizens may have access to military and civilian service as volunteers.

Austria in the World

In comparison with the overwhelming majority of the states in the world, Austria ranks among the richest countries. This gives us a share in global responsibility. As a member state of the European Union, we want to take on this responsibility and to participate in solving global problems.

This does not only include our contribution to global peace-keeping but also to the fight against hunger world-wide, against diseases and epidemics as well as against the deprivation of education. International environmental protection, too, is one of the global obligations no country can shoulder alone.

As an EU member state we want to make Europe use its relations with the other countries of the world to urge those concerned to respect human rights, and we want Europe to be aware of its responsibility vis-à-vis the poorer countries of the world.

In the future, too, Austria is to give protection and assistance to people who are persecuted for political, racial or religious reasons. At the same time, precautions must be taken to prevent the explosive rise in migratory flows in the world, which is due to the bad economic situation in the countries of origin, from causing irresolvable social and economic conflicts in the European countries. Unavoidable public order measures must always be enforced while respecting human dignity and human rights.

We recognise the importance of a constructive policy of developmental cooperation with the countries of the Third World. It is one of prerequisites to safeguard world peace and an environmentally sound sustainable development of all national economies. Austria must fulfil her obligations and act in keeping with her declarations of intention under her development policy, seeking to improve its effectiveness in constant dialogue with her partners in developmental policy matters.

We are firmly convinced that, as a member state of both the European Union and the United Nations as well as its special organisations, Austria is faced with a variety of major tasks which we are highly capable to fulfil, and fulfilling these tasks will also enrich and stimulate developments in our own country.