



Lower Saxony Land of Future

(Zukunftsland Niedersachsen)

Government programme 2008 – 2013
of the CDU in Niedersachsen
(short version)

Ten good reasons to vote for the CDU



CDU

Record of Success

Political core messages

The record of success by the CDU-ruled government is certainly respectable. The catalogue of aims and measures with which the coalition started in spring 2003 has nearly been completely implemented.

The coalition contract has been fulfilled – Lower Saxony is flourishing.

We still have lots to do in Lower Saxony; we have many other aims to make our federal state of Lower Saxony a land of the future. Therefore we would like to introduce you in the following to some key statements regarding the record of success of the CDU-ruled government. At the same time you become acquainted with the most important core messages which are contained in our government programme.

Finances

Our systematic consolidation policy deserves attention. In 2002 13 years of SPD-government culminated in the highest annual indebtedness of the state of almost 3 billion Euro! However, we have to think beyond the next day. For our children, we want to secure the same political playing field for ideas which we have today.

After the change of government we have successfully stabilized the federal state's finances during the last four years and stopped the steady decline into the indebted state started by our predecessor in government, the SPD:

- For the first time in six years Lower Saxony has again passed a budget which is constitutional.
- Since taking office we have reduced the net borrowing each year by another 350 million Euros. In 2007 we lowered the new indebtedness for the first time since 1990 below the threshold of 1 billion Euros.
- When we took office the debt clock in the parliament of Lower Saxony was still racing along with 93 Euro per second. After four years of CDU-ruled government we have slowed down its speed to 30 Euro per second in 2007.

Family

The better compatibility of family and career and genuine freedom of choice for every parent are at the centre of family policy in the Lower Saxon government. With the federal programme „families with a future – education and care for children“ which is endowed with 100 million Euro over four years altogether, we have therefore created the approach road towards a needs oriented development of family friendly infrastructures with an improvement of the child care offer, early learning network and the compatibility of family and career.

We have extended the project family midwives: Starting already this year state-wide 200 qualified family midwives are supporting pregnant women and young mothers in difficult circumstances with clearly defined help in every day life.

Policy for generations

Establishing more-generation-houses in Lower Saxony we created a genuine pioneering solution for intergenerational life: the old and the young support each other in many things in daily life under one roof.

We have founded the state initiative Lower Saxony generation oriented every day life (*LINGA*), which offers senior citizens a new online-service and provides information on age-based products, services and events.

Work and economy

Where the CDU is governing, the people are better off: After nearly five years of a CDU-ruled government Lower Saxony is moving forward economically and in terms of labour market again – the achievements deserve attention:

With the growth of the real gross domestic product from 2004 to 2006 Lower Saxony is shining in second place before all other federal states. Almost 80 % of the medium-sized Lower Saxon companies evaluate the economic conditions in Lower Saxony to be „good“ and „very good“.

Most of all, we are pleased, because the trend reversal on the labour market has happened. In 2006, on an annual average the figure of unemployed persons in Lower Saxony has shrunk compared with 2005 by 8.6 percent – that is the greatest decline for 15 years. With the Lower Saxony-Kombi, introduced in July 2006, we were able to take more than 1,800 persons out of unemployment. The Lower Saxon Pact for Education and Training adding 13 % traineeship contracts since 2004 has been prolonged until 2010.

Lower Saxony is very attractive for business founders: concerning the founding of new businesses Lower Saxony holds an outstanding third place among all federal states. Within the past four years to support founders of new businesses we have within the scope of a comprehensive campaign for de-bureaucratisation and deregulation abolished almost half of all administrative provisions, repealed many laws and reduced the number of authorities and state offices by 122 in a nationwide exemplary modernisation act.

In favour of a targeted promotion of commerce, trade and industry and in order to make promotion instruments more effective we have centralised all consultation and financing services of the state in the NBank as a universal promotional bank of the state.

Consistent educational policy

With the introduction of a non-contributory school-kindergarten-year as a bridge year between kindergarten and school in the summer of 2007 we were able to create an optimum interlocking of kindergarten and school.

In Lower Saxony we have carried through the School Reform Act. The orientation level was abolished, the central Abitur (A-Levels) introduced with unified examination questions statewide. We also introduce the Abitur after 12 years of school to prevent the Abitur candidates from suffering age-based disadvantages on the European labour markets vis-à-vis candidates from the neighbouring countries. In a sustainable approach we have reinforced the Hauptschule (practice preparing school) by introducing 60 annual days of practice in the years 8 and 9 for which we were praised by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce as well as by the Chamber of Trade.

By a targeted re-filling of all free traineeship places we were in a position to clearly improve the provision of lessons. 11,800 newly employed teachers of which 2,500 were additional are the foundation of our success in educational policy. With 160 additional “fire fighter tutors” in the year 2007 the provision of lessons is further improved. Due to this we were in a position to overcome the so-called “Schroeder gap” from the time when the SPD-ruled government did not employ a single additional teacher.

With 81,000 teachers today teaching in Lower Saxon schools they are as many as never before.

Security

We have made our state safer and strengthened the police statewide. Up to the year 2011 we will employ statewide 1000 additional police officers (800 new employments of police officers as well as 200 transfers of employees from other administrative areas). With currently 20,700 established posts there are today so many police officers in Lower Saxony as never before.

Structural reform with the Ministry for Internal Affairs we reinforced the fire fighter organisations with the creation of the position of a state fire chief.

The people in Lower Saxony shall live in safety: as an equal aim of law enforcement in Lower Saxony we have anchored the protection of the public from further crimes of offenders granted social reintegration.

Environment

For a Christian party like ours, safeguarding creation is a central task of practical policy. Environmental and nature protection are high on governmental agenda of the state.

Lower Saxony is a pioneer in the sector of wind energy and energy of sustainable raw materials: We have spurred on the planning for the Norderney performance corridor with eight offshore wind farm projects and thereby facilitated investments in the amount of approximately six billion Euros for approx. 3,000 mega watts of wind energy performance. Since 2004 biogas plants, biomass power stations and heating installations have been constructed with an investment volume of about 1 billion Euros. At the year end 2007 approximately 600 biomass plants yielding an electric power of at least 300 MW will be operating.

We take the climate change scenarios of the UN-report on climate very seriously. Therefore we are establishing three new posts for the climate change area in the Ministry for the Environment.

Still to come in the year 2007 we shall reinforce climate- and coast protection on the East Frisian Islands.

To also strengthen the future chances of the Lower Saxon economy the federal government started a "Fuel Cell - State Initiative" because the environment friendly fuel cell technology will become a key technology.

On account of the great interest we have prolonged the Lower Saxony mobile energy saving vehicle started by the federal government in cooperation with the NABU Lower Saxony and the federal chimney sweepers' guild in the year 2005 for two more years.

Rural areas and food industry

Lower Saxony is a state of wide open spaces. Almost half of all Lower Saxons live in the country. Therefore it was always CDU policy to strengthen life in the country and rural areas and to improve the business location conditions in rural areas.

Next to the automotive industry agriculture is one of the most important economic branches of our state. Since 2003 we have supported the economic competitiveness and ecological functions of agriculture and the development of rural spaces with the PROLAND-promotion programme. In the period from 2000 to 2006 the Ministry of Agriculture has made available over 1,1 billion Euros. With more than 200 million Euros we have advanced village renovation in Lower Saxony. For the fight against animal epidemics the Task-force Veterinary Issues was established at the federal Authority for Consumer Protection and Food Safety.

Key points of our government programme 2008 – 2013

Our government programme 2008 – 2013 sets clear targets:

Finances

From 2010 onwards no new debts: We shall continue to lower the spending of the federal government each year by at least 350 million Euros. Presumably from 2010 debts can be paid back for the first time in the history of Lower Saxony.

Clear restrictions for indebtedness in the federal constitution: to avoid the way back into the indebted state we shall make it difficult to take out new loans with the introduction of restrictive regulations in the federal constitution.

Family

Federal programme “Families with a future”: By providing financial means within the scope of the federal program we will improve the services in the area of child care for children under the age of three years.

In medium-term all three kindergarten years (nursery school) will be exempted from contribution: It is our aim to give every child the opportunity to attend nursery school. This way nursery school becomes increasingly a place for early learning.

Development of crèche and day nursery places and child minder models: We want to offer mothers a real choice whether they want to care for their children themselves or use a qualified child minder in order to better combine family and career.

“Family-check-up” to investigate all decisions with respect to family friendliness: All decisions of the state (see also legislation) are being examined in terms of family friendliness in order to avoid a regulation which is hostile towards families.

Policy for generations

Senior Citizens-Service Offices: We will advance the area-wide facility of senior-citizens service offices as contact point for older citizens who have questions in terms of coping with every day life in old age. The Lower Saxony office “New type of living in old age”: We will improve locally residential consultancies for senior citizens, to enable senior citizens to find appropriate and suitable habitation.

Voluntary year for senior citizens to be advanced: Senior Citizens find a specific task for which they take on responsibility in the social, cultural or environmental sector.

The model is to be extended statewide.

Work and economy

Citizens’ work in the charitable sector for the long-time unemployed: In several model communities each long-term unemployed will be given an opportunity to work. Citizen’s work is an occupation in the charitable sector which is subject to social insurance contributions.

Contact exchange for the mediation of company successors: We want to support the forthcoming generational change in many enterprises through advice and mediation of appropriate successors for the organisations.

De-bureaucratisation/limitation of statistical records obligation for enterprises: We want to release companies from dispensable statistical records obligations.

100 million Euro-loan-programme for smaller and medium-size hotel enterprises: Due to an accumulation of investments for modernisation particularly in the smaller and medium-size hotel enterprises we specifically want to make available to them low interest loans for modernisations.

Education

Refusal of new school reform debates: The structured school system in Lower Saxony is efficient and is continuously extended and supported by us.

11,200 additional places of study until 2010: We secure the chances for places of study for the coming sixth formers, in particular also for the two sixth former groups in 2011.

The focus is on scientific degree courses (image campaigns for engineer degree courses): We want to counteract the deficiency of technical and scientific junior employees and also particularly inspire women to enrol for technical degree courses. In addition there will also be an image campaign for engineering degree courses.

Security

Introduction of the “detention as a warning”: Young offenders should feel detention as an immediate punishment of their offence and be warned and made aware by detention what they have to expect in the case of further delinquency.

Programme “Sweating instead of just being jailed”: The existing programme is to be extended. The person who is imposed upon a monetary fine but is unable to pay should not be jailed but forced to work in the community.

Extension of the preventative monitoring of telecommunication: In order to prevent serious crimes and in particular the danger of terrorist attacks we want to make use of the preventative monitoring of telecommunication. This will always be done within the framework of constitutional limits and upon judicial permission.

Environment

Increase of the proportion of renewable energies by 25 % of the total energy consumption until 2020: We will reduce the CO₂-emissions and at the same time make a contribution to soften climate change.

Promoting environmental studies at schools: We particularly want to direct awareness of the young early towards acting in an environmentally friendly way. For this purpose we will anchor mandatory study programmes for all primary schools in the sector biology, environment and nature protection.

Promotion programmes for the energy saving refurbishment and modernisation of buildings: We want to incite private and industrial building owners in cooperation with the NBank and its cheaper loans to an energy saving building refurbishment.

Ten good reasons to vote for the CDU

1. Since 2003 on the road to success with the CDU.

In Lower Saxony we successfully reversed employment market trends. We have worked hard to cut deficits while adding 2,500 new jobs for teachers, as well as an additional 1,000 urgently needed jobs for policemen. Lower Saxony advanced to first place in its efforts to reduce bureaucracy. We offer better support for our children with a charge-free school kindergarten year.

2. Using advantages of location for more work and employment.

The CDU is synonymous with target-oriented business development and effective support of business start-ups. From graduates to pensioners – we allow for best education and training opportunities. We use Lower Saxony's centrality by developing a strong infrastructure with new roads, rail tracks and harbours.

3. Assistance for medium sized business: You can rely on the CDU.

Seasoned entrepreneurs can rely on the CDU: we abolish unnecessary bureaucracy, after almost cutting existing provisions by half. We decidedly work against shortages in skilled labour. Carefully we aim at the transfer of knowledge between companies and universities. Additionally, we create advisory systems for corporate succession.

4. More prospects in innovative Lower Saxony.

Until 2011, we will create 11,200 additional university places. The campaign „Innovative Lower Saxony“ stands for our intensified commitment to investment into research cooperation and innovation networks.

5. Wide educational opportunities for all.

Good early education for children, schools close to home, as well as a steadily improved day-care system are elementary cornerstones of our education policy. However, we refuse ideologically motivated school structure debates. Together with improved quantity and quality of tuition we create best possible educational opportunities for all.

6. Strong constitutional state, strong citizens.

Lower Saxony has a very competent police force – we want to make available all technical possibilities for the fight against crime. The CDU strongly stands for strengthening victim rights, the introduction of „detention as a warning“ for young first offenders, intensive prevention and the fight against international terrorism.

7. Family policy is the CDU in Lower Saxony's core.

The CDU recognizes the educational performance of mothers and fathers and wants to guarantee real freedom of choice for the compatibility of family and profession. We achieve this aim through the actual and demand-based development of the crèches and day nurseries, improved health care for children and adolescents, as well as the introduction of the charge-free three kindergarten years until 2013. Already now the parents experience a massive financial relief through the introduction of the third charge-free kindergarten year.

8. Respect for the experienced generation: active and respected in old age.

In the future state of Lower Saxony elderly people should receive recognition for what they have achieved in life and be able to actively bring in their whole vitality. The CDU supports this, by insuring the intensive dialog and the reliable cooperation of the generations, especially with volunteers. Exemplary joint living together of all generations already takes place in households in Lower Saxony consisting of several generations – we want to expand this. Furthermore reliable ambulant caring structures and senior-friendly ways of living shall guarantee dignified sunset years.

9. Responsibility in dealing with our environment.

The CDU wants to establish Lower Saxony with its advantages of location in wind energy and biomass permanently as the nation-wide market leader. A large proportion of renewable energy reduces CO² effectively. We will intensify environmental education in schools in cooperation with local authorities and clubs, as well as the research into climate consequences and embankment and coast protection.

10. Christian Wulff is the Prime Minister for all Lower Saxons.

With Prime Minister Christian Wulff our state is taken care of. He stands for honesty, reliability and determination in politics and he is the guarantor for the continuation of the new road to success of Lower Saxony. Please support his work for the future state of Lower Saxony with your vote at the state election. Together we move our state forward. Together with Christian Wulff.