

## **Introduction**

Social Democratic Youth's political programme seeks to provide answers to the question of what social democracy leaves in the hands of today's young people and the generations that will follow them. The programme is based on a programme of principles endorsed in 2024.

**Solidarity** is about collective and global collective responsibility. An understanding that we are all interdependent on each other. We are not all starting from the same base line in the race against climate change or in our demand for decent working conditions. In their domestic and foreign policies, prosperous democracies must not only lead by example, but also act for the good of the entire planet. Social democracy , **as an international movement**, is at its best in this endeavour: promoting peace between people, states and alliances of states.

Solidarity as a value also includes responsibility for the environment. **Sustainable development** is built into the core of our ideals and thus also into the heart of the society of our dreams. People, businesses and other communities must be required to commit to ethical and sustainable development principles. The fact that Finland is a small and remote country is not a reason for Finns to spend more than other countries.

A sustainable and democratic welfare state creates **freedom for** people. Low income and wealth inequalities, an equal education system and evenly distributed prosperity are prerequisites for everyday freedom. **Work** also brings freedom and grants security. Everyone has the right to meaningful and safe work, fair pay and working conditions, and opportunities to influence their work. The modern welfare state must be able to reform and modernise, without compromising its social democratic values. Generational needs and a changing world increasingly require a debate on what well-being and human rights mean in this age.

For the vision of a socially, ecologically and culturally sustainable society to become a reality, we cannot forget economic sustainability. The welfare state

should not be the cause, consequence or solution to all of life's problems, but rather like a trampoline that gives people and businesses a base from which to push forward. The social democratic welfare state supports and helps, but also demands in return.

The Social Democratic Youth's more immediate requirements are:

1) **A green and sustainable transition.** Finland will be a carbon-neutral circular economy\* in 2030 and carbon-negative soon after. Significant investment in renewable energy and support for the transition to carbon-neutral industry and a society adopting electricity. Marshes destroyed by peat production will be restored. The forest industry will abandon clear-cutting and taxation will incentivise production and consumption of environmentally friendly goods. A transition to more sustainable food production must be made. In line with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the loss of biodiversity will be halted by 2030 at the latest and more attention will be paid to animal welfare.

2) **Finland as a leading country in education.** Inequalities and class gaps will be tackled by moving to two-year pre-primary education and individual support in primary school, and secondary education provision will be developed such that courses can be cross-listed between vocational education and upper secondary education. The education system will be made less degree-centred. Individual flexibility will be increased by, for example, creating flexibility in the pace of study, diversifying the range of courses offered by higher education institutions, and promoting new innovations such as open pathways and online degrees in higher education. Pressure to achieve is done away with and learners are given individual support. The level of student support will be increased and the loan bias of the student support system will be removed by moving to Universal Credit.

3) **A solution to the mental health crisis.** Access to non-emergency mental health treatment is available within a week and mental health assessments are included in health checks. Access to psychosocial treatments and brief psychotherapies as well as threshold-free support is guaranteed. Instead of treating symptoms and developing services, society is also actively seeking to dismantle structures and norms that undermine well-being. Therapy must not

become a prerequisite for coping with everyday life, but the threshold for access to psychotherapy must be lowered in light of the current situation.

**4) The welfare state and the trade union movement in support of employment.**

Social and health services and employment support are provided through a one-stop shop. The introduction of personal training accounts supports continuous learning for employees. The effects of climate change on working life will be anticipated and employees' security against change will be strengthened. Changing the structure of working life, for example by experimenting with shorter working hours and making it more profitable to employ individuals with incapacities.

**5) A complete overhaul of the social security system.** Simplifying a fragmented and inefficient system into a Universal Security system that responds flexibly to different needs and life situations.

**6) An overhaul of democracy.** The voting age is lowered to 15. Democracy education will be stepped up and public sector actors will be obliged to use participatory budgeting\*. National elections will see the introduction of election-specific campaign ceilings\* and stricter rules on election financing. There is an absolute zero tolerance for hate speech. The use of mass data is regulated at the Finnish and EU levels to protect people's privacy.

**7) The EU of the future will be at its strongest as a union of close cooperation, speaking with one voice at global negotiation tables.** As a union of close cooperation, the EU must develop in a direction where it upholds democracy, subsidiarity and civil liberties in all its activities, achieves carbon neutrality in the union and actively promotes human rights globally.

**8) Sustainable and regulated economic growth.** The goal of growth is to eradicate inequality and poverty. Corporate responsibility regulation as well as the control and transparency of supply chains will be improved. The right to organise will be guaranteed globally and the ILO's work to promote workers' rights will be supported. Fiscal policy and active labour market policies are aligned countercyclically\* as required by the economic situation. Carbon tariffs\* are introduced.

9) **The fairest tax policy in the world.** Capital tax will be made more progressive. In the longer term, there must be a gradual move towards more uniform VAT rates and a reduction in the overall rate. The change must be implemented fairly, by simultaneously increasing the level of social security and developing other forms of support. The dividend tax relief for unlisted companies will be modified to discourage aggressive tax planning. A minimum tax for global companies\* will be promoted to prevent tax havens. The extensive system of tax deductions, which has weakened public finances, will be rationalised. The inheritance tax progression will be increased for large inheritances.

10) **Reforming vibrant municipalities and welfare regions.** Municipal reform will strengthen the basic municipalities, guarantee their ability to fulfil their tasks and reduce dependence on state funding alone. The number of statutory tasks for municipalities must also be funded so that the pressure of the transition period for welfare regions does not create further problems for municipalities. In addition, the number of welfare regions must be examined to ensure that they can fulfil their tasks without creating differences in equality or equity between welfare regions. Improving the autonomy of welfare regions by introducing a welfare region tax.

11) **Making Finland a model country for human rights. Finland ratified the UN Indigenous Peoples Convention ILO 169\* and the Nordic Sámi Convention\*.** The situation of Karelians, Ingria and Roma will be analysed together with minorities and their endeavours to improve their own situation will be supported. Work needs to start at the UN on a treaty on the rights of young people. Sexual offences legislation must be based on consent. Everyone's right to confirm their legal gender by self-declaration will be safeguarded. In Finland, it must be possible to define gender as "other" or not to define it at all. The government must take steps to implement the commitments of the Istanbul Convention.