

Introduction

The Social Democratic Youth's political program seeks to provide answers to the question of what social democracy has to offer to today's youth and the generations to come. The program builds on the platform adopted in 2014.

Solidarity is about communal and global collective responsibility. It is about understanding that we are all interdependent. We are not all in the same starting point 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 benefit of the globe. Social democracy, **as an international movement**, is at its best in this work: 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 it is at the heart of the society of our dreams. People, businesses, and other entities must be obligated 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 consume more than other countries.

A sustainable and democratic welfare state creates **freedom** for people. A narrow income and wealth gap, an equal education system, and evenly distributed prosperity are prerequisites for freedom in our everyday lives. **Work** also brings freedom and security. Everyone should have the right to meaningful and secure work, to fair pay and working conditions, and to have a say in their work. The welfare state in its current form must be capable of modernization, without compromising its social democratic values. The changing world and the changes in the needs of human generations increasingly require a debate on what wellbeing and human rights mean in the contemporary world.

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 our problems, but rather a trampoline that provides people and businesses with a foundation from which to push forward. The social democratic welfare state supports and helps people, but also makes demands in return.

The Social Democratic Youth's immediate demands are:

1) A green and sustainable transition. Finland must become a carbon-neutral circular economy* by 2030 and carbon-negative soon after. Significant investments must be made in renewable energy, and the transition to carbon-neutral industry and electrified society must be supported. Peat production must be abandoned, and damaged peatlands must be restored. The forest industry must abandon clear cutting, and tax incentives must be targeted to the production and consumption of environmentally friendly goods. The transition to more sustainable food production must be made. In line with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, biodiversity loss must be halted by the mid-2020s at the latest, and more attention must be paid to animal welfare.

2) Finland as a leading country in education. The growing inequality and the gap between social classes will be tackled by transitioning to two-year pre-primary education, by providing individual support in primary education, and by further developing the dual model in upper secondary education. The education system must become less degree-centered. Individual flexibility must be increased by, for example, allowing more flexibility in the pace of study, diversifying the study offering in higher education, and promoting new innovations, such as access to university through open university studies, as well as online higher education degrees. Pressure for study progress must be eased, and learners must be provided with individual support. Financial aid to students must be increased, and the student financial aid system must be made less reliant on loan by introducing a new universal welfare system.

3) A solution to the mental health care crisis. Access to non-urgent mental health care must be granted within a week, and mental health assessments must be included in health checks. Access to psychosocial care, brief psychotherapy, and low-threshold support must be guaranteed. Instead of simply treating symptoms and developing services, society should also actively seek to dismantle structures and norms that undermine wellbeing. Therapy must not become a prerequisite for coping with one's everyday life.

4) The welfare state and labor unions to support employability. Social and health care services as well as support for employability must be provided under one roof. State aid to promote the education of citizens over 25 years of age (a personal "savings account" to finance one's studies) must be introduced to support the continuous learning of the working age population. The effects of climate change on working life must be

anticipated, and the protection of employees in the event of restructuring must be enhanced. Working life structures must be transformed: this may include testing shorter working time and making the employing of individuals with work disability more binding.

5) A complete overhaul of the social security system. The current fragmented and inefficient system must be replaced with a new, simplified *universal welfare* system that flexibly responds to different needs and life situations.

6) Renewing of democracy. The voting age must be lowered to 16. Education for democracy must be increased, and public sector actors must be obligated to use participatory budgeting*. Election-specific restrictions on electoral campaign financing must be introduced* for national elections, and the electoral financing regulation must be tightened. There must be zero tolerance for hate speech. The use of mass data must be regulated at the national and EU level to protect people's privacy.

7) The EU of the future will be strongest as a union that works in close cooperation and speaks with one voice or as a federation based on a common constitution. The EU, as a union in close cooperation or as a federation, must develop in a direction where it upholds democracy, the principle of subsidiarity, and civil liberties in all its activities, achieves carbon neutrality in the Union, and actively promotes global human rights.

8) Sustainable and regulated economic growth aimed at eradicating inequality and poverty. Corporate responsibility regulations, as well as the control and transparency of supply chains must be improved. The right to unionize must be guaranteed globally, and the ILO's work to promote workers' rights must be supported. Financial and active labor market policies must be projected countercyclically* as required by the economic cycle. The carbon border tax* must be introduced.

9) The fairest tax policy in the world. The capital taxation must be made more progressive. In the long term, there must be a gradual move towards more uniform VAT rates and a reduction in the general tax rate. The change must be implemented fairly, by simultaneously increasing the level of social security and developing other forms of support, such as price regulation of medicines. Dividend tax relief for unlisted companies must be modified so that it does not encourage aggressive tax planning. A minimum tax for global companies* must be promoted to prevent tax havens. The extensive system of tax deductions, which undermines public finances, must be made more efficient. The estate tax progression must be increased for large inheritances.

10) Reform to promote vibrant municipalities and wellbeing services counties. A reform in local government structures to strengthen municipalities, guarantee their ability to fulfill their duties, and reduce dependence on state funding alone must be introduced. The number of municipalities' statutory duties must also be limited so that the pressure of the transition to the wellbeing services counties will not create further problems for municipalities. In addition, the number of wellbeing services counties must be taken into consideration to ensure that the counties can fulfill their duties and avoid creating disparities in equality and equity between the counties. The local self-government of the wellbeing services counties will be improved by introducing the counties' right to levy taxes.

11) Finland to become a model country in human rights. Finland must ratify the UN Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO 169)* and the Nordic Sámi Convention*. The situation of Karelians and Romani must be analyzed together with the two minority groups, and their work to improve their situation will be supported. The UN must start working on a treaty on the rights of young people. The legislation on sex offences must be based on consent. The right to verify one's legal gender by self-declaration must be guaranteed. In Finland, people must be able to define their gender as "other" or to not define it at all.