

# **Resolution of the 24<sup>th</sup> Party Conference of the CDU of Germany**

## **A Strong Europe – A Bright Future for Germany**

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### **I. The CDU – The German Party of Europe**

Unity in Diversity

### **II. Europe – A Major Success Story**

Europe Stands for Peace, Freedom and Prosperity

A Stable Euro – A Strong Europe

### **III. The “Stability Union” – Europe’s Latest Challenge**

The Consequences of SPD/Green Rule Violations

The Crisis is a Debt Crisis

Maintaining a Balance between Individual Responsibility and Solidarity

The Eurozone’s Yardstick – The World’s Best Economies

The Tasks that Lie Ahead

### **IV. The Political Union – The Challenge of Tomorrow’s Europe**

The Completion of Economic and Monetary Union

### **V. Our Compass for Europe**

The Franco-German Friendship

More Europe, Less Regulation

Europe as a Force for Peace

Europe of the People

## **I. The CDU – The German Party of Europe**

The CDU is the German party of Europe. For us, being part of Europe is not just a question of practical politics; it is something which lies at our very heart. From the very beginning, we have been involved in shaping the idea of Europe, while at the same time being ourselves shaped by it: under Konrad Adenauer, the course was set for European unification. During Helmut Kohl's time as Chancellor, the creation of the Single Market meant that everyone became more aware of Europe in their everyday lives. And Angela Merkel pointed the way forward by agreeing the Treaty of Lisbon during Germany's term as President of the European Council.

The CDU's long and successful history as a driving force behind the process of European unification serves as a motivator and also reminds us of the duty that we have to finish the task of creating economic and monetary union. We want to strengthen the European Union and make it something that is firmly entrenched in the hearts of its people.

### **Unity in Diversity**

Europe is a community of values. This holds true despite all the diversity and differences that exist between its various Member States. Europe's strong foundations are provided by its rich culture and eventful history, which have led us towards peace and freedom, democracy and the rule of law. Above all, we are unified by our common roots of Greek philosophy, Roman law, Christianity and Judaism, along with the liberal spirit of the Enlightenment. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is a visible expression of these common values and beliefs.

For the CDU, the various nations and their national identity are the defining elements of a Europe which is united in diversity. We do not want a Europe that is ruled and administered in a centralised way. This is why we advocate the basic principles of regional and local self-government, subsidiarity and proportionality. Within the parameters set by its Member States, the European Union operates in accordance with federal principles and methods. This is how it is described in our 2007 Party Manifesto.

## **II. Europe – A Major Success Story**

Since it came into being more than sixty years ago, European unification has proved to be a huge success story and a truly unique instrument for peace. From its early beginnings as a way of creating closer economic cooperation between former adversaries, it has grown into an influential and internationally-respected union of states. Peace, freedom and prosperity are the central pillars that support the idea of Europe and which make it a role model and point of reference for other regions of the world. Germany and Europe have never before enjoyed such a degree of freedom, peace and prosperity as it has experienced over the last few decades.

Lasting peace is a prerequisite for lasting prosperity. For centuries, the peoples of Europe were constantly at war with each other. Both sides went out and destroyed, worked hard to rebuild, and then destroyed again, leading to a never-ending spiral of persecution, displacement and untold suffering. In its position at the centre of the continent, Germany was often particularly involved in, and affected by, this cycle.

Germany was forcibly divided up in the aftermath of the criminal way it started the Second World War and the atrocities committed by its National Socialist dictatorship. It was only thanks to people's desire for freedom that the dictatorship of the SED was overthrown in the peaceful revolution. History took a happier turn when, with the agreement of our neighbours and partners, our country was once again unified.

The fact that German life is no longer characterised by walls and barriers, that we can travel freely within Europe and live, work and study where we like demonstrates the overwhelming success of European unification. In Europe, freedom, democracy and social security are bound together more closely than anywhere else in the world. The political and economic benefits for Germany exceed by far the costs of EU membership. We believe it falls to us to consistently ensure that our citizens are aware of this fact. Debates on European policy in the German Bundestag and the processes of discussion and opinion-making within our party all make an important contribution in this respect.

Our generation will decide whether we will overcome the challenges of the 21st century together with Europe. To do this, we need to foster a common idea of Europe. The CDU has set itself this task. We are aware of the responsibility we bear in finding a solution to

the economic and financial problems that beset us. This is why we want to finish the task of creating an economic and monetary union and establish the European Union as a strong political union.

### **Europe Stands for Peace, Freedom and Prosperity**

We Europeans have united for the better in peace, freedom and solidarity. However, Europe's challenge at the beginning of the 21st century is no longer solely how to ensure peace and increase prosperity. Now it is also about how to stand up for universal human rights and international law in a globalised world and how to fight for the freedom of people whose rights are being abused. In many corners of the world, this means supporting people who are fighting to lead their lives in dignity and freedom. Our own interests and the German Constitution demand that we "promote world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe".

Climate and species protection need effective international regulation just as much as energy and trade matters. This is why we are working for a strong Europe that can act effectively to promote our concerns on the international stage. This is the idea that unites us and inspires us for the future.

But we will only be successful in this quest if Europe stands together. Of the seven billion people who live in the world today, less than one in a hundred lives in Germany. And by 2050 it is estimated that the earth's population will exceed nine billion, while the populations of Europe and Germany will continue to decline. Even today, the population of China is larger than that of Europe, North America and Central America put together.

There is also a seismic shift going on in terms of the flow of trade and the international centres of economic power. China has overtaken Germany as the world's leading exporter and is leaving us for dust. The emerging nations are playing an ever-greater role in world trade, and new free trade areas are being created, leading to new international alliances.

With 500 million citizens, the European Union can serve to advance our values and interests and represent them effectively to the rest of the world. The European Union is by far the biggest trading power, and, with a GDP that outstrips all other single markets and a strong euro, it sets the basic conditions for globalisation. This is why the CDU wants to

see a strong European Union. Together we can help the concepts of democracy and the social market economy to take root around the globe. The Treaty of Lisbon was a milestone in this process. Its clear recognition of the social market economy – the social model of economic efficiency combined with social welfare that has taken Germany so successfully through the last decade – has served to anchor this concept firmly within Europe. It therefore provides an excellent basis for shaping the Europe of the future.

### **A Stable Euro – A Strong Europe**

We are committed to the euro and want all 17 members of the eurozone to come together to defend it. For the last ten years, the euro has expressed and been a part of the daily life of a united Europe. Indeed, here in Germany we have benefited significantly from the single currency. Over 40 percent of German exports are to eurozone countries. The EU single market provides the domestic market that makes our country globally strong. Nine million jobs in Germany depend on it directly. It is estimated that in the last two years alone, membership of the eurozone has increased our economic growth by at least two percentage points, amounting to something in the region of 50 billion euros.

The euro has ensured low rates of inflation and increased spending power. It has brought security, improved planning capacity, and great advantages in international trade and global monetary policy. Since the introduction of the euro, prices in Germany have been much more stable than during the era of the deutschmark. The value of the euro against the US dollar has also increased significantly over the last ten years, and it is now second only to the dollar as the world's major currency.

The euro not only strengthens the economy and makes us more competitive on the international stage, but it also provides political stability by bringing Europe together both internally and in terms of its external actions. So the euro is more than just a currency; it is a joint project that is essential for Europe's future.

### **III. The “Stability Union” – Europe's Latest Challenge**

By making the monetary union a lasting and stable union, as was originally conceived, we will strengthen confidence in Europe's sustainability and give future generations greater

room for manoeuvre. In this way we will follow in the footsteps of Helmut Kohl and Theo Waigel, who made the Stability and Growth Pact the basis of our single currency and who made it clear that the success of a single currency depended on adherence to strict rules.

The process of European unification has always fluctuated between periods of great progress and times of stagnation and crisis. The CDU has always seen it as an opportunity to make Europe stronger. And this is how we see the current situation: a time to learn the right lessons and prepare Europe for the challenges to come.

The responsible policies that have been driven forward by the German federal government, led by the CDU, mean that Germany still stands for financial stability and budgetary discipline on the European continent. As a result, we can once again fulfil our responsibilities to the interests of Europe and our own country. We have brought Germany out of the global financial and economic crisis stronger than ever, and in the same way we would like to lead Europe out of its debt crisis.

### **The Consequences of SPD/Green Rule Violations**

The SPD/Green coalition made some serious mistakes with its irresponsible debt policy and its approval of Greece's inclusion in the eurozone. These decisions did serious damage to Europe's stability and shook the foundations of the euro.

In four consecutive years, from 2002 to 2005, the SPD/Green ruling coalition broke the rules on deficit limits set by the Maastricht Treaty, which stipulated that the eurozone countries had to keep their net new borrowing below three percent of their GDP. The coalition also bent the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact. During these years, Germany failed to live up to its reputation as a leader in terms of stability and sustainable growth. So it is hardly surprising that there have so far been no sanctions taken against all these violations of the Stability Pact. The consequences of these actions have now dominated politics and the economy for more than 18 months and led the European Union to face one of its greatest challenges since its inception.

### **The Crisis is a Debt Crisis**

The main causes of the current crisis are the excessive levels of debt; in particular current account deficits caused by the lack of competitiveness of certain eurozone countries. The mountains of debt have not arisen solely because of economic recovery programmes to

counter the global financial and economic crisis, but above all because so many countries have for so many years lived above their means or focused their economies too narrowly on specific sectors such as the property or financial sectors. They either failed to introduce overdue reforms or introduced them too late, which as a result had a dramatic effect on their competitiveness. This downward spiral was made still worse by the way the financial markets and banks were not properly supervised and regulated and failed to keep in step with global developments. In this way, the financial markets failed to carry out their supporting function. This kind of honest analysis is needed if we are to find our way of the crisis.

The CDU-led federal government has already taken the following steps towards creating a stable fiscal union:

- From next year, the Member States' budgetary policies must be presented to the European Commission for review. Only then will the national parliaments be able to finalise their budgets for the following year (the "European Semester").
- A comprehensive set of measures have been introduced to make the Stability and Growth Pact more powerful and give it greater credibility. It can now act more quickly, has a wider range of monitoring procedures at its disposal, and sanctions in the event of rules violations are now much stricter than before. Exertion of political influence has been significantly restricted and stronger preventative measures introduced. We are committed to continuing down this path.

In parallel to these measures to strengthen economic governance, we have set in motion further major decisions with a view to stabilising the euro:

- In addition to the Greek bailout, the whole eurozone has in the short-term been provided with a safety-net by the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). This allows us to assist euro area Member States that are in financial difficulties, help them to restructure their economic and financial systems and regain their lost competitiveness.

The alternatives to this would be an incalculable pooling of national debt or uncontrolled sovereign defaults, with clear consequences for the whole eurozone and the global econ-

omy. When Lehman Brothers went bankrupt three years ago, it really brought home to us how the shockwaves from the collapse of just one major bank can have a huge effect on the tightly-knit global economy. It is imperative that we avert further bankruptcies.

The European Stability Mechanism (ESM) will, therefore, succeed the EFSF in the near future. The ESM will go beyond the instruments of the EFSF and open up new possibilities which we do not currently have in our armoury. As a result, we will be in a position to restructure overindebted eurozone countries using a series of controlled measures, without endangering the existence of the eurozone. ESM assistance programmes require regular parliamentary oversight and must always have a time limit. It must also be ensured that euro area Member States receiving assistance from the ESM should, for their part, properly fulfil and implement the conditions of the loan.

### **Maintaining a Balance between Individual Responsibility and Solidarity**

The same is true of all financial support programmes: first of all the German Bundestag must approve them individually. Secondly, solidarity is not a one-way-street: we believe bailouts should only be given on a quid pro quo basis. So the countries that need help have to commit to carrying out wide-ranging reforms in order to regain their stability and competitiveness. This reform process should include bringing their sometimes significant levels of public capital into the restructuring of their public finances, and also securing an appropriate contribution from the private sector. The German federal government has insisted that the International Monetary Fund should be involved; using its wide experience to ensure that financial assistance is paid out in installments, and only when the affected countries have taken the agreed steps towards reform.

These measures are designed to limit the acute threat to the eurozone's very existence and the risk of contagion between eurozone countries. Of course they are not able to remove the causes of the crisis, but they can give Europe the time it needs to build a bridge between short-term crisis measures and a lasting "stability union".

We must be aware of the fact that there is no single solution to the sovereign debt crisis. Fundamental structural changes are needed in the Member States and the European Union as a whole. First of all, each individual country needs to set its own course, reduce its debt and strengthen its competitiveness. This holds particularly true for those countries that

require a bailout. Some countries will be able to do this very quickly; others will need our assistance and incentives for many years to come. Many of them will have to carry out radical reforms that will be accompanied by long-drawn-out and controversial public debate.

We also need to have the powers to push these reforms forward in a patient yet firm manner. We have to be objective, but we will stand up to populists and those who seek to oversimplify, and we will continue to pursue our goals. At a European level, we have to continue to seek joint solutions that reconcile different interests in a fair way. Together, we have a long journey ahead of us, and it will require a great deal of patience and strong powers of persuasion. As Christian Democrats, we will face this challenge, and as committed Europeans we are in a position to persuade other Europeans.

### **The Eurozone's Yardstick – The World's Best Economies**

In future we want to continue to be successful in the global markets and be amongst the world's most successful economies. So we are keen to make Europe more competitive, in order to bring about lasting, sustainable growth and to be able to preserve our social model and help it develop still further. For this reason, the heads of state and government of the eurozone countries and a further six EU Member States have instituted the Euro Plus Pact. This is designed to strengthen the economic pillars of the monetary union, improve the coordination of economic policies, hone competitiveness and as a result prevent harmful economic imbalances.

The CDU's message is clear: it must not mean that the strong are made weaker. It is our aim to make the weak stronger and make the performance of the very best act as the yardstick for all. Firstly, this means that the principle of subsidiarity demands effort on the part of the countries themselves. However, as the largest and strongest economy in Europe, Germany will offer its support. Our aim is to ensure that the Europe of the future remains a globally sought-after location due to the innovation and hard work of its people and its international reputation for reliability.

### **The Tasks that Lie Ahead**

In order to meet the challenges that lie ahead, we will continue to work within the framework of existing treaties. The principles enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon, which came into force on December 1, 2009, offer better possibilities than those of previous treaties, and we need to take advantage of them.

- 1.** In order to create long-term financial stability, we are actively promoting the introduction of a debt brake in all eurozone countries, following the German model. This would then need to be strictly observed in national budgetary policies. The acceptance of a country into the eurozone should only be possible if provisions for such a debt brake are incorporated into that country's constitution. In a Europe where populations are dwindling, public spending is effectively being shouldered by fewer and fewer people, so it is essential to urgently reduce government debt as a percentage of GDP. We need to set an example to the rest of Europe by quickly reaching a position where we are not creating any additional new debt. It is important that future generations do not have unnecessary burdens placed upon them, so we must ensure a fair balance of interests between generations.
- 2.** Adherence to the criteria set out in the Stability and Growth Pact will only be possible through savings, structural reform and sustained growth amongst Member States. The CDU is convinced that it should be possible to create a new impetus for prosperity in Europe with more market-based instruments, less bureaucracy and a reduction in state intervention. One of the key requirements will be a regulatory framework that promotes not only fair competition between the various regions, but also the kind of solidarity needed to reduce the differences in prosperity levels that currently exist within Europe. The EU Structural Funds are the ideal instrument for this. They are already being used to help weaker regions close the competitive gap with stronger regions. The CDU of Germany would like to see these funds used in an even more targeted way to help reduce the economic imbalances and infrastructural handicaps that currently exist between regions and to exploit the growth potential of all regions. This would include, for example, the expansion of the European transport network, additional investment in education, research and development, as well as targeted support for those economically-weak regions and key industries that are of vital importance for Europe's future competitiveness. The European Commission must, therefore, ensure that these funds are used both effectively and in a sustainable way. Our goal is not to preserve the established economies, but to promote those that can play a key role in Europe's future.
- 3.** All eurozone countries must take responsibility for their own financial obligations.

For us, liability and personal responsibility go hand-in-hand. We do not wish Europe to have the kind of automatic financial equalisation that exists between the German states, for example, and nor should there be any automatic financial guarantees.

4. Not least because of the absence of rights to issue directives or intervene in those countries with excessive debts, we are strictly against the introduction of euro-bonds. Pooling debt is not part of the principle of solidarity. Rather than stem the tide of debt, this would actually serve to remove the biggest incentive to maintaining effective budgetary controls – the fear of high interest rates.
5. The CDU is committed to the independence of the European Central Bank (ECB) and the German Bundesbank (Central Bank) within the framework of the European system of central banks, as well as the division between monetary and financial policy. Monetary policy should not be subject to the decision-making of political majorities. Only in this way will the ECB be able to stop Europe going down the route of cheap money and so prevent inflation. We do recognise, however, that the ECB's purchase of government bonds in recent months was necessary to help maintain the overall stability of the euro. With the restructuring of the EFSF and with the forthcoming ESM, there are a number of alternative instruments available that should allow the ECB to stop buying government bonds. But they should only be used as a last resort.
6. The lessons learned from the debt crisis should be taken into account in the future regulation of financial markets and institutions, especially in terms of capital adequacy, risk assessment and the banks' understanding of their roles. In this way we want to avoid endangering financial support for small and medium businesses. The debt crisis has shown that a zero risk weighting for bonds does not reflect the reality of the situation. All financial institutions have a duty to retain sufficient capital to reduce the risk of another financial crisis. For the CDU, it is clear that the banks themselves should secure that capital from the markets. If this is not possible, then the eurozone countries should take appropriate steps to support the banks. In recent years, Germany has shown that it has the right instruments available to take action in times of crisis. The EFSF should only be called upon, under the appropriate

constraints, when the support measures put in place by a particular eurozone country become too much of a burden. This kind of situation presupposes that, if no assistance is given, the ability of the affected eurozone country to meet its financial obligations would be under threat.

7. The CDU would like to see a global regulatory framework in place for the financial markets, as they operate on a global basis. The CDU-led government in Germany has already been able to make considerable progress on this front at both European and international level. Formerly unregulated or insufficiently-regulated players on the financial market, such as hedge funds and rating agencies, are now subject to Europe-wide regulation. System-relevant financial institutions now have instruments at their disposal that will make it possible for them to be restructured or wound up in an orderly way, without the risk of contagion. With the Financial Stability Board, we now have a global early warning system in place. Capital adequacy requirements for financial institutions are being tightened up, regulation of financial markets is becoming more effective and consumer protection is being strengthened. We want to ensure that all those involved in the financial markets carry out their functions in a responsible way.

Every product, every player and every trading centre must be subject to a basic degree of regulation. We will continue to fight for this within the framework of the G20 and to lead the way on this issue in Europe. We are committed to ensuring that the German method of risk evaluation has a greater influence on international accounting standards. External ratings alone should no longer be the decisive factor in the structuring of portfolios. We would like to see banks and financial institutions once again building their own risk assessment capabilities and complying with all the necessary regulations. Particular attention must be given to the shadow banking sector. It is important to ensure that participants in the financial markets are not allowed to carry out classic banking business outside of the regulated banking sector. The risks resulting from this type of business must be countered by the regulatory measures already in place and those that are still in the pipeline. We also want to support the plans of the European Commission to establish a European rating agency.

8. We support the speedy introduction of a financial transaction tax. If the introduction of such a tax as part of a joint action by the EU and USA or within the whole of the EU itself is not possible, we would support an initial implementation within the eurozone, while continuing to push for its introduction throughout the EU and globally. The tax system should be designed in such a way that the interests of Germany as a financial centre are adequately protected.
  
9. Political role models are also needed to strengthen the European idea in people's minds. For this reason, we aim to put forward a joint leadership candidate for the EPP at the next European Parliamentary elections. If necessary, these steps could be taken during an interim phase based on intergovernmental solutions. Because the CDU's European policies are fundamentally based on the Community method, which guarantees the capacity to act, democratic legitimacy and transparency, it is important that new regulations covering intergovernmental cooperation are integrated into EU treaties in the medium-term. A good example here is the Schengen Agreement that has done away with internal EU border controls. It was initially negotiated between individual states and only became part of official Community procedures with the Treaty of Lisbon.

#### **IV. The Political Union – The Challenge of Tomorrow's Europe.**

The capacity to act, democratic legitimacy and transparency are the prerequisites for trust between people in the political sphere. In a global world it is sometimes easier for individual nation states to safeguard their ability to shape policy in certain areas if they act collectively rather than alone. If we cede certain responsibilities to the European Union, we can actually gain influence because of the combined political weight of the Union. For this reason we regard the transfer of certain roles and responsibilities at European level, within the parameters of the principle of subsidiarity, as the best way to safeguard our interests.

If we are to create a genuinely democratic and transparent political union with the capacity to act, we need changes to the EU treaties currently in force, as they have been shown to be lacking in certain areas. This is why we now want to create the conditions necessary for such changes. Our goal is to create a consensus as soon as possible and draft an EU

Convention with a clearly-defined mandate to carry out these changes.

### **The Completion of Economic and Monetary Union**

The completion of economic and monetary union is a further milestone on the road to political union. We believe the following objectives are vital for the EU Convention:

1. In addition to the steps already agreed, the Stability and Growth Pact should be further strengthened as an instrument of European financial policy through further automatic sanctions that are not subject to political decision-making. To this end we would like to see the European Stability and Growth Pact integrated into EU treaties so that it can act as a debt brake at European level. At the moment, it is essentially made up of regulations that can be changed far more easily than an EU treaty. This is what we want to avoid in the future. We also want the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to enforce the regulations of the Economic and Monetary Union, including those of the Stability and Growth Pact, and be in a position to punish infringements.
2. In the event of serious breaches of the Stability and Growth Pact, we need a well-defined, multi-level process for countries to use to get their national budgets under control:
  - The first step would be for the European Commission to offer help and advice in the event that a eurozone country is no longer in a position to meet the requirements of a stable single currency, in spite of the stronger oversight provided by the European Semester.
  - If, despite this, no progress is made, then the next step would be for the Commission to personally support the efficient and effective use of budgetary funds and to coordinate the use of EU bailout programmes.
  - Should the country in question get into financial difficulties, then the ESM could be activated for a fixed period of time, if this is considered absolutely necessary for ensuring the financial stability of the eurozone. This would require the imposition of strict financial and economic conditions and the approval of the German Bundestag.
3. If, despite these measures, a country finds itself unable to meet its debt obligations,

then a systematic process of debt reduction will need to put in place. The aims of this process will be to restore the country's financial capacity to act and to safeguard public services. During this phase, the European Commission should provide the affected eurozone country with a commissioner responsible for budgetary savings, who would oversee the use of budgetary funds and the implementation of any restructuring measures that may be required. This commissioner should also have the right to intervene if the country does not meet its obligations. The whole process must be designed in such a way that private creditors are involved in each phase of the restructuring and that a chain reaction in the markets, or indeed the risk of contagion for other eurozone countries, is avoided. If a Member State of the monetary union does not wish to comply with the rules associated with the single currency in the long term, or is not in a position to do so, it has the option, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon on withdrawal from the European Union, of withdrawing from the eurozone, but without leaving the European Union. It would then be on the same footing as those countries that do not have the euro as their currency.

4. We want to develop the future European Stability Mechanism (ESM) into a "European Monetary Fund".
5. We want the political union to have a face, and for this reason we believe that in future the President of the European Commission should be directly elected by all EU citizens. Remaining members of the Commission should also be subject to approval by the European Parliament.
6. We want the political union to have a democratic bicameral system. It should be made up of the European Parliament, as a directly elected people's chamber, and the Council of Ministers, as representatives of the EU Member States, each holding equal rights. In order to carry out their work, both chambers should have the right of initiative for EU legislation alongside the European Commission.
7. Representation within the European Parliament should be changed in the medium-term to better reflect the population sizes of the various Member States.

## **V. Our Compass for Europe**

Europe is facing significant challenges, and we know that Germany's future prospects will depend on its ability to react to these challenges in an appropriate way. We will only be able to meet these challenges if Europe remains strong.

### **Franco-German Friendship**

The close cooperation and trust that exists between Germany and France, our most important European partner, is fundamental to our future success. This cooperation has been in evidence once again during the debt crisis. However, German-French proposals can only be successful if they take the interests of all parties into consideration, and by this we mean the smaller Member States just as much as those countries in Central and Eastern Europe that often have to take the lead when it comes to reform. We want to find a common way forward with all our EU partners and find compromises wherever possible, in order to align the various positions adopted by different countries. However, European integration requires a driving force. Both Germany and France are aware of their responsibilities in this respect and want to continue facing up to them in the interests of Europe as a whole. The CDU attaches particular importance to the cooperation between France, Poland and Germany within the Weimar Triangle.

### **More Europe, Less Regulation**

We do not see more European integration as an end in itself, but more as the key to strengthening Europe's position in the world. We believe in the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and want to promote them with renewed vigour. Piecemeal policy initiatives coming out of the European Commission make it much more difficult for ordinary citizens to accept the idea of Europe. They want more Europe in those areas where it can really be of benefit, but not a Europe that wants to regulate every small detail of their lives. We would therefore like to see a new kind of regulation culture at the European Commission, whereby they exercise their right of initiative in such a way that it is simply not possible to have too much regulation. We are also keen to create an independent EU regulatory control council. A summary and codification of legal acts that cover a similar area of regulation could go a long way towards improving the transparency of European legislation. The implementation of existing legislation throughout Europe should also take prec-

edence over the introduction of new proposals. We would therefore like EU commissioners to have the authority to issue directives to their Directorate-General. The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament also have a responsibility here as legislators. It must also be possible to transfer some responsibilities back to the Member States.

### **Europe as a Force for Peace**

The rounds of EU enlargement carried out so far have brought political and economic benefits to Germany. However, full membership in the European Union cannot be the only answer for every country. The yardstick should not only be whether a country can fulfil the criteria for membership, but also whether the European Union itself is in a position to accept that country. We believe that a privileged partnership between the European Union and Turkey, rather than full membership, is the right solution at this time.

The political union includes a common foreign, security and defence policy that should lead to joint European defence and, in the long-term, to a defence union using European armed forces. We want to strengthen Europe's role as a force for peace in the world. For the European Union, as for its Member States, domestic and foreign policy issues are intertwined. The European Union is our answer to globalisation, so that Europe can assert itself both at home and abroad.

### **Europe of the People**

The idea of Europe must form part of its citizens' everyday lives. Personal encounters lead to a better understanding of other people and to the recognition that the strength of our continent lies in its diversity. The CDU therefore supports projects that help to bring people together, such as town-twinning programmes. We would also like to propose a Europe-wide initiative to promote multilingualism in the workplace.

We welcome the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon has served to strengthen Europe's social dimension. There must be a set of minimum working conditions for people across the whole of Europe, but the structure of the welfare systems themselves should remain under the jurisdiction of national governments. European regulations should not be allowed to undermine or abrogate national standards of protection, co-determination rights or levels of social security.

Only if we unite as Europeans will we be able to see our ambitious goals on climate change adopted throughout the world, protect the environment and safeguard resources for Europe's citizens. Safe, sustainable and affordable supplies of energy for homes and businesses are vital if countries are to develop successfully. For this we will need an internal EU energy market and trans-European energy networks. The CDU is therefore also committed to the development of an effective European energy policy.

We need more Europe in certain important political areas. The treaty negotiations that this involves can present a significant challenge. The European Union must maintain its unity, but those Member States that are willing and able to move forward more quickly should be allowed to do so, as was the case with the euro and the Schengen Agreement. It should then be possible for the remaining Member States to join them at a later date. There must be no disengagement from the European Union, whether substantive or organisational. Rival European institutions without clear-cut areas of jurisdiction would only serve to compromise the political union. A strong Europe needs strong political institutions.

The European Union only exists with the agreement of its citizens. So whenever there is a transfer of additional responsibilities to the European Union, it must be accompanied by a high degree of capacity to act, democratic legitimacy and transparency.

In order to improve this transparency, people should have appropriate access to all European decisions. The information must be presented simply and clearly and must be easy to find. The internet potentially provides an excellent tool in this respect.

It is the role of politicians to work in a resolute and level-headed way to find the right way forward for our country. The CDU of Germany has taken on this responsibility. Our Christian view of mankind provides us with a compass which allows us to view these challenges as opportunities. We are ready to play an active role in consolidating the entity that is Europe. A bright future for Germany depends on a Europe that is economically strong and that fulfils its social responsibilities.