

Enough is Enough:

UN SDG Summit in Sight

Germany Needs to

Face up to its Challenges

Civil Society Declaration on

Germany's Sustainability Policies

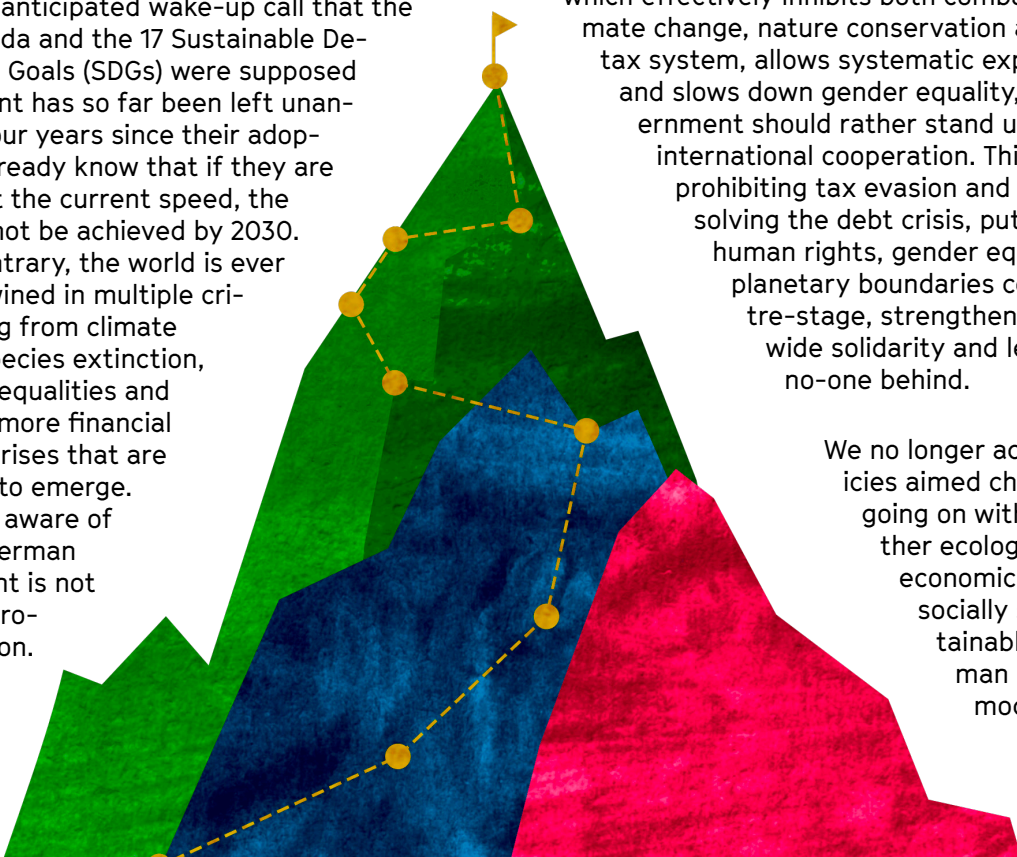
If everyone in the world were to live like people do in Germany, we would need three planets. For in an ecological, social as well as economic sense, the German and European model is anything but sustainable, and it is incompatible with the achievement of global justice. If we were to globalize our German lifestyle, all renewable and natural resources available to humankind in a year would be consumed by early May. We would live a life based on credit – Earth's credit – and on exploiting nature.

The much-anticipated wake-up call that the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were supposed to represent has so far been left unanswered. Four years since their adoption, we already know that if they are pursued at the current speed, the goals will not be achieved by 2030. On the contrary, the world is ever more entwined in multiple crises ranging from climate change, species extinction, growing inequalities and hunger to more financial and debt crises that are beginning to emerge. While fully aware of this, the German government is not taking appropriate action.

Germany – abysmal gaps in its sustainability policies

Our way of life and our economy have to change fundamentally in order to become sustainable. This includes standing up for a global economic and financial political order that renders sustainable development possible, facilitating its achievement instead of constantly blocking it. Instead of enabling a trade and financial system which effectively inhibits both combating climate change, nature conservation and a fair tax system, allows systematic exploitation and slows down gender equality, our government should rather stand up for true international cooperation. This means prohibiting tax evasion and avoidance, solving the debt crisis, putting human rights, gender equality and planetary boundaries centre-stage, strengthening worldwide solidarity and leaving no-one behind.

We no longer accept policies aimed chiefly at going on with our neither ecologically, economically nor socially sustainable German economic model. We



Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Germany

Germany emits about 11 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents per capita per year (2017). Less than 1 ton would be sustainable.



Source: Umweltbundesamt (2019 und 2014). [<https://kurzlink.de/hoehe-klima01> und <https://kurzlink.de/hoehe-klima02>]

urgently need political measures of an unprecedented scope to stop current trends and initiated a turnaround.

For above all, climate change is accelerating relentlessly. Germany has contributed to this dangerous development much more than countries of the Global South. Yet we are even failing to achieve the modest goals that we have set ourselves. Our climate policy in the energy sector is insufficient. Virtually nothing is happening in the transport and heating sector. The phasing out of coal is all but reluctant, and is incompatible with the Paris Agreement. No wonder young people across the world are taking to the streets every Friday, calling on governments to finally wake up and take real measures to stop climate change. It's their future that we are

burning up with every ton of coal and every litre of diesel. What we need is a much faster end to coal and a substantial change in our transport system. Stop excessive car traffic, stop ever-increasing freight and air traffic! We finally want a working, affordable public local, suburban and long-distance transport system for everyone as well as regional economic cycles.

German and European agriculture policy is one of the main reasons for species extinction. It is a disaster zone when it comes to sustainability. For the forthcoming reform of the EU Common Agricultural Policy, we call for the principle of only spending public money on public services. Public money should go into an environmentally and climate-friendly agriculture!

Furthermore, German and European agriculture and trade policies are still prospering at the expense of small-scale farmers in the Global South who are being pushed out of their local markets because of cheap and subsidized exports from Europe. Our agricultural policies have to stop exacerbating global inequalities and poverty, and violating the human right to food.

Global inequalities within and between countries are increasing, thus denying millions of people their chances of a life in dignity and peace. In order to effectively counter these conditions, we need governments capable and willing to act. However, with policies that rather support massive growth of private wealth while accepting the depletion of public budgets, we see the potential of governments to act decreasing. This is also the case for Germany. Compared to other countries in Europe and worldwide, Germany has one of the highest rates of wealth inequality. But extreme inequality is no law of nature. It's the result of policies that put profits before people. In order to reduce inequalities and leave no one behind, Germany finally has to introduce fair taxation models, invest in public basic social services such as education and health, and end any structural discrimination of all people.

Land Use Abroad

Germany imports almost 4.5 million tons of soybean meal, mostly for factory farming. This requires the use of almost 3 million hectares of land in the Global South (approximately the equivalent of Belgium), impacting local small-scale farmers and biodiversity.



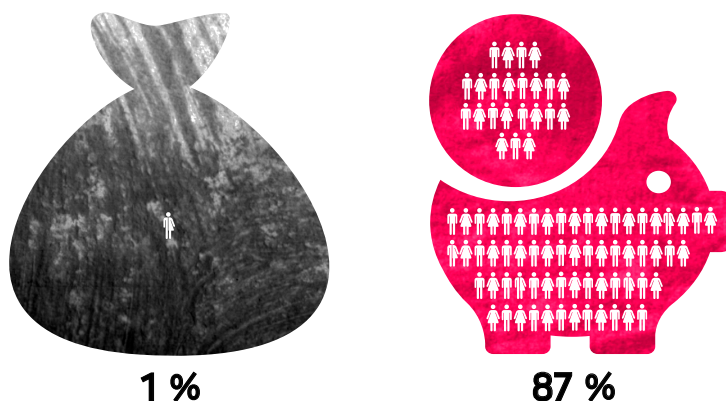
Source: BUND/BUNDjugend (2019): Essen, Natur, Tier und Wir: Was unser Fleischkonsum mit Umweltproblemen zu tun hat. Berlin, p. 5. [<https://kurzlink.de/hoehe-agrar>]

We have long been aware of these problems and terrible conditions. But our government hasn't changed its

policies one single bit. Without the continuous pressure of society, there is little hope of breaking the prevalence of the status quo and actually achieving a more sustainable economy. Bearing this in mind, there is a growing concern about the fact that like in other countries, in Germany, too, we now see a worrisome trend towards putting pressure on civil society. We need to preserve the charitable status of all organizations contributing to the forming of a public political will. A democracy needs dedicated civil society organizations – in fact, they are one of its key characteristics. Civil society needs to be fostered and supported by a government, even though or perhaps even precisely because it is voicing uncomfortable truths. We therefore call for a reform of the non-profit tax law, providing legal security to civil society.

Division of Wealth in Germany

The richest 1 per cent have as much wealth as 87 per cent of the rest of the population.



Source: Oxfam Germany (2019): Im Öffentlichen Interesse: Ungleichheit bekämpfen, in soziale Gerechtigkeit investieren. Berlin, p. 4. [<https://kurzlink.de/hoehe-ungleich>]

Moving up from the base-camp – SDGs pointing the way

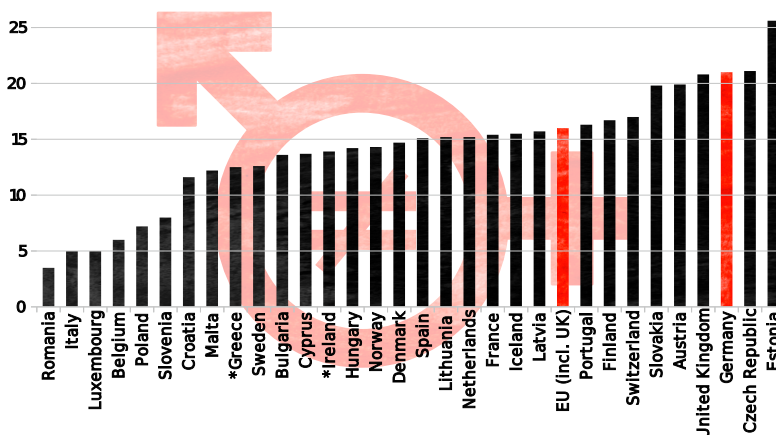
We need to finally end poverty and hunger worldwide, reduce inequalities within and between countries, achieve gender equality and inclusion, enable equal participation for all people in all areas of society, and provide dignified basic social services – while preserving our natural resources. We can only succeed if we drastically reduce the consumption of energy, and land consumption in Germany and worldwide, while limiting it in absolute terms. For this, we need an ecological and social U-turn in our agricultural and transport systems, as well as a decentralized energy transition that actually helps us fulfil our commitments to the Paris Agreement.

With all these demands at heart, the SDGs have to become the guiding principle of all of Germany's policies. We call on the German government to finally give their implementation full priority. We are facing a crucial crossroads in Germany. This is not a question of a lack of knowledge. But what we need is to finally see real political steps towards real sustainability. Steps big enough to face the challenges.

As members of civil society, we call on the German government to no longer disregard its commitments and to finally start implementing sustainable policies. What we need is nothing less than to finally see action in line with our international responsibility for a sustainable and just future for all people on this planet.

The unadjusted gender pay gap

Values for 2017 (*2014), difference between average gross hourly earnings of male and female employees as % of male gross earnings



Source: Eurostat (2019). [<https://kurzlink.de/hoehe-gap>]

List of Supporters





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