

# Caring instead of cutting back!

## Our local politics for Hesse

**Die Linke**

We represent the interests of those who have to live from their work – not from stock market returns. Together with them, we fight for better living and working conditions, for social security, and a society in which no one is left behind. We resolutely oppose the denigration of people – against any racist distraction tactic intended to obscure the true problems of this capitalist society: social justice, public prosperity, and climate protection for all!

For this, we need a strong, anti-fascist, anti-racist, feminist, and socialist left that fights for redistribution and the expansion of social infrastructure. We say: There must be no billionaires while others can barely make ends meet. It is a scandal that billions are mobilized overnight for the arms industry – while municipalities don't know how to fulfil the tasks imposed upon them.

We advocate for détente and against the increasing militarization of society at all levels.

These principles also apply to our local politics. Left-wing local politics puts life and everyday routines at the centre. Our communities determine the lives we lead. Here are our daycare centres, swimming pools, and playgrounds. We do not accept the continued dismantling of our public services and infrastructure.

The Left Party advocates for a good life for all. We are guided by the concept of "caring cities," demanding redistribution and a restructuring of the financing of our municipalities. A strong democratic society and a good everyday life for all residents of our municipalities require sufficient funding. We demand the consistent implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which protects women from violence. Local politics must be based on the needs of the people on the ground. The profit-driven logic stands in the way of this. To change this, we can, for example, put energy production into municipal hands and thus promote climate-friendly projects. We went to thousands of doors and asked people what their concerns were. The answer was clear: In cities, it's the prices, and in rural areas, it's the prices, assuming there's any supply at all.

Therefore, in addition to the specific problems on site, we are focusing on four points throughout Hesse:

### **Affordable Housing**

Municipalities must use their resources to counter market-driven rent policies. Affordable housing must be guaranteed for everyone. Women and other genders are particularly affected by violence on a daily basis and therefore especially dependent on safe havens. Discrimination in the search for

housing, for example based on migrant names or other characteristics, must have no place in our cities and communities.

### **Preventing Profit Maximization**

Municipal housing companies must not serve profit maximization, but must build significantly more social housing with permanent rent control and offer affordable housing. Rents must be reduced immediately for tenants with low incomes.

### **Ending housing Vacancy**

We are already using the "Vacancy Reporter" and will take action with high-profile campaigns if municipalities remain inactive.

### **Preserving rental apartments**

We oppose the displacement of tenants through the conversion of rental apartments into condos and stand in solidarity with those affected. Existing social preservation areas must be maintained and new ones designated quickly.

### **Modernization yes, rent gouging no**

The energy-efficient modernization of apartments is sensible for climate protection reasons and must be promoted. However, it must not be at the expense of tenants through rent increases. We check heating costs, report excessive rents and rent gouging, and support these efforts with high-profile public actions.

## **Strong public transport – more mobility for all**

Mobility must be guaranteed for everyone. We are committed to expanding public transport, especially in rural areas: It belongs in public hands.

### **Guaranteeing mobility**

We want a comprehensive mobility guarantee, including in rural areas. This requires the establishment of additional bus routes, comprehensive on-demand bus services without surcharges, and accessible bus stops. Other public transport options – trams and rail – must also be expanded, and all modes of transport must be interconnected.

### **Mobility beyond the profit principle**

Municipal transport companies must no longer be subject to the profit principle – competitive tendering and wage dumping must be ended. We want the state to fully finance municipal transport services and to classify public transport as a mandatory municipal service. That means: money instead of appeals. To achieve the transport revolution, fair wages and good working conditions for employees are needed.

### **Free public transport**

Our goal remains free public transport for everyone. Until then, we need free travel for students, children and young people, pensioners, and people with low incomes.

The transport revolution also includes expanding cycle paths and creating more space for pedestrians. Future urban planning concepts must take this into account.

## **Securing and Expanding Public Infrastructure**

While the Chancellor announces further social cutbacks and pursues upward redistribution, we emphasize: Public infrastructure is the foundation of the welfare state – it determines whether people can participate in social life. It must be defended, democratized, and massively expanded at all levels, including the local level

### **Hospitals in public hand**

Hospitals belong in public hands – instead of further privatizations, we need investment, needs-based care, and better working conditions and collectively agreed wages. Home care must be strengthened: with more support for family caregivers and better outpatient care.

### **Education independent of income and place of residence**

Education must not depend on place of residence or income; therefore, we need comprehensive, sufficient childcare places – with better collectively agreed wages and relief for childcare workers. Schools need buildings that don't crumble and modern equipment. School social work and all-day programs must also be expanded.

### **Public services require participation**

Libraries, swimming pools, youth centers, and senior centers are considered "voluntary services," yet they are essential. Women's shelters must be adequately funded to accommodate people without secure residency status and other particularly vulnerable individuals. Public infrastructure belongs to all of us. It must not be cut back or privatized.

### **A functioning administration requires good working conditions**

Last but not least, we need a functioning public administration with a sufficient number of employees. Especially in metropolitan areas, many approved positions remain unfilled because the pay is too low to afford the expensive rents. The consequence: Many socially and ecologically valuable projects cannot be implemented at the necessary speed. That is another reason why we support the demands of trade unions and staff councils for adequate pay in the public sector.

## **Climate protection begins in the municipalities**

By 2050, we will already have a global warming of 2-3 degrees. In the Rhine-Main region, 4 degrees and more. This means: heat waves of 40°C and more with significantly more heat-related deaths. Agriculture and working outdoors will only be possible for extended periods with considerable health risks. We must therefore also phase out coal, oil, and gas at the municipal level! Public utilities should be returned to citizen ownership and run as non-profit organizations.

The energy transition must be implemented in a socially responsible way, switching to renewable energy sources and not to the far too expensive hydrogen, which only benefits investors and leads to high heating costs. We reject the district heating plans because they only lead to monopolies for investors who then dictate heating costs to us. But locally limited cooling networks (for nearby apartment blocks) in citizen hands must also be created.

We must take measures in the municipalities to protect the population, especially children and the elderly before the increasing heat stress. The prerequisite is: "Forest instead of asphalt." Only in this way can we limit the heat in cities and preserve drinking water.

The Left Party is committed to preserving forests and opposing further highway expansion and gravel extraction. Because compensatory areas and reforestation cannot replace trees that are over a hundred years old. We need more trees within towns and cities, with parks. This can somewhat reduce the heat in cities.

## Equipping municipalities well

We know: All of this costs money. But municipalities are underfunded. Even conservative calculations show that their share of income tax is far from sufficient.

### Improving revenues

That's why we advocate for doubling the municipalities' share of income tax. Furthermore, the principle must apply: Whoever orders, pays! We are also committed to appropriate business taxes and their development into a municipal economic tax. To prevent business tax dumping by individual municipalities, we demand a minimum tax rate of 420 points.

An employer-funded public transport levy is also an important building block of a solidarity-based public service system.

At the same time, a consistent redistribution is needed at the federal level: Wealth and large inheritances must finally be taxed appropriately again. We need a tax policy that relieves the burden on lower and middle incomes and exhausted by what has accumulated at the top. We maintain: There should be no billionaires.

### No to militarization

But the trend is going in a different direction: Wealth inequality is increasing, and the federal budget is shifting increasingly in favor of the military-industrial complex. The amendment to the Basic Law has issued a blank check for armaments. Even funds from the special "Infrastructure" fund will end up with the military: Under the cover of bridge repairs, roads are to be made fit for the military.

We oppose the advancing militarization. Public funds belong in social services, education, health – and in local climate protection, not in tanks and arms research.

**Support The Left Party (Die Linke) so that a social wind blows again in Hesse.**

## Learn more

This text briefly outlines the local policy principles of the Left Party in Hesse for the 2026 local elections. The full version can be found here:



Full version of the "Dietzenbach Declaration"

The Left Youth [solid] Hesse has also adopted a local policy program:



Youth Election Program of the Left Youth [solid] Hesse