



**mouvement
écologique**



**Towards a society that is synonymous with
the notion of a great place to live**

**SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS FROM MOUVEMENT ECOLOGIQUE
FOR THE LEGISLATIVE PERIOD 2018-2023**



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écologique**

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A liveable society for tomorrow:

9 central ideas for the future presented by Mouvement Ecologique

The number of people who stand up for different ways of living and alternative forms of economy is increasing, also in Luxembourg. Cooperatives and community gardens sprout from the ground, the development of infrastructures in the field of public transport continues, a debate on desirable growth has been launched: these are some of the positive messages that encourage and convey the impression that we have already made some steps in the right direction, i.e. towards a more sustainable society.

But: Populist tendencies in various countries, feelings of powerlessness against a rampant globalization, increasing climate change and climate refugees, loss of biodiversity, waste of limited resources, increase of stress and pressure in the workplace ... - these and other messages are diametrically opposite to the positive developments.

Are the positive initiatives only tentative approaches that can hardly be expected to change anything in the overall development of our society? Unfortunately, this statement seems to apply.

Hereafter a striking example in order to illustrate: The return of the wolf might be viewed as an important symbol in the field of nature conservation work, but the dramatic decline of biodiversity, particularly in the cultural landscape, outweighs by far the increase of a few species.

Working on one or the other factor using positive initiatives may be necessary and useful in order to point out social and economic alternatives. But it changes little or nothing to the highly problematic situation and its underlying causes.

Questioning our whole social and economic model and setting up - with courage and commitment – truly innovative models, following new directions is mandatory!

A basic social and ecological reconstruction of the economic and social system is essential if we want to enable all people of present and future generations - in our society as well as around the world - to live in dignity.

Our society needs a paradigm shift, a change in what we consider as fundamental values and conditions!

Or else: the increasing awareness of the importance of the circular economy is certainly to be welcomed; nevertheless, if the economic policy tends to continue to be marked by the dogma of economic growth, the approaches to establish a reinforced circular economy represent - in the end - only a fig leaf in global development.

We have lived beyond our means for decades and thus consume the natural resources of the Earth at an ever-faster pace. The "Earth Overshoot Day" - meaning the day on which the demand of the people for natural resources exceeds the ability of the Earth to reproduce these resources - moves further forward in the calendar every year. 20 years ago it was in November, today, „Earth Overshoot Day“ is at the beginning of August.

Speaking of the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita Luxembourg ranks number 2 worldwide; in the "Human Development Index" of the United Nations, it comes in 20th place, whereas in the "Happy Planet Index", Luxembourg is number 139: this contrast demands some serious reflection!

1 On the way towards fair world trade

... instead of antisocial and unecological trade agreements and alms to the people of the countries of the global South

The current trade policy goes hand in hand with devastating environmental and social consequences worldwide. The applicable world trade is particularly unfair against the so-called developing countries, which are first "fleeced by unfair trade rules", and then fobbed off - in a kind of "sale of indulgences" - with "charity", by rich countries. Multinational corporations are the winners – society is the loser. And more and more people recognize and critically question that fact.

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- distributive justice, social and environmental objectives are the foundations of world trade, and that globalization is put at the service of people;
- superior power and concentration of multinational corporations will be broken and must be subjected to a reinforced democratic control;
- the strengthening of regional markets has priority, as far as possible, against globalization tendencies (for instance in food production);
- trade agreements are designed in the sense of a real partnership between the countries of the North and the countries of the South.

We expect the next government to

- be committed to the principles of a corresponding reorganization of world trade, this at EU level as well as in **global committees**;
- encourage the Chamber of Deputies to say **NO to the controversial investor protection in the CETA agreement** (the free trade agreement between the EU and Canada);
- request - at EU level - a **revision of previous trade agreements** and a reorientation of the currently discussed free trade agreement in terms of a transformation in the spirit of democratic, social and ecological criteria;
- realize a **fundamental reconstruction of financial and trade systems** according to social and ecological criteria.



② Initiating a sustainable economic model for Luxembourg instead of running after the illusion of green growth

The dogma of permanent economic growth inevitably leads to a dead end: with regard to the emissions and the consumption of resources, Luxembourg belongs to the most wasteful countries around the world. With more efficient production processes in the spirit of the sole "Rifkin" philosophy – the Luxembourg economy cannot be reshaped as a truly sustainable economy. From a social perspective, the current model is also in danger not to be fit for future, being too much under the pressure of an ever increasing productivity ... associated with increased performance pressure and its consequences.

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- economic growth is not an end in itself, and that the well-being of the people and the preservation of our natural resources are at the forefront of policy development;
- there is a fundamental reorientation of our business model, which takes into account the sustainability of our natural resources, promoting regional economic cycles, and putting an end to the growing pressure of an increase in productivity (which is also at the cost of employees)
- the economic structure promotes the coexistence of people, the sharing of goods and that it generally gives an enhanced role to new models of general interest.

We expect the next government to

- lead a **structured, evidence-based debate with all stakeholders** and - as far as possible - also with the **participation of the public about a transformation of our economic model**, with consideration of the development of the Greater region;
- consistently **promote the welfare economics** and the creation of appropriate conditions (e.g. for sharing economy, community-supported agriculture...);
- **specifically promote the regional added value and the regional circuits**, for example in the agricultural sector, in order to valorise wood as a precious raw material;
- conduct a **sustainable tax reform**, as a central measure, and to promote **proper pricing** (e.g. in food production) as an essential tool for a sustainable business model;
- take initiatives leading to the reconstruction of the economic system: from the **removal of counterproductive subsidies**, an analysis regarding the **alternatives for the financing of the social model** on the **implementation of social cost-benefit analyses for larger projects**, up to the **creation of comprehensible criteria from a sustainability perspective for the economic exploration**, the granting of state aid to support companies or the provision of state-owned terrain for businesses;
- initiate a real debate about what **political and social framework to the accompaniment of the digitisation process are necessary**. Key words are: privacy regulations; preventing social disruptions; public interest orientation, distributive justice and so forth;
- **revise the existing laws**, to make the granting of operating licences - beyond the application of the best technology - dependent on the effects on the global environmental space;
- introduce a **sustainability check in all relevant policy decisions**, thus at least partly to ensure that the long-term character is taken into account in decisions.



3 Social justice, an environment that is worth living in and well-being as priority objectives ...

... rather than social exclusion, consumer society pressure and workplace stress

Many people question our present-day society model also because, in reality, it puts too little value on social justice, "good life" and well-being. More or less conscious ideals of our society are currently: consumption, performance, a continuous 'more'... and – at the same time - the gap between "poor" and "rich" is increasing despite continuous economic growth.

The consequence is a living environment that, as a matter of fact, does not sufficiently meet the real human needs. "Lack of time", "caught in a hamster wheel", driven by the pressure for success, burn out... are some of the negative consequences. The present generation must seize the opportunity to develop society in a positive way or even to redesign it.

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- well being is increasingly brought into the focus of social and political objectives, and not the 'always more'-demand;
- togetherness, social exchange and social cohesion, promoting social contacts, the principle of "a fulfilled life", the "slow down" on a human level are the key basis of our community of values;
- our towns and villages are designed again human-oriented and people-friendly;
- (environmental) political decisions as well as our health care system do not only target the reduction of burdens or the avoidance of diseases, but the well being of the people.

We expect the next government to

- set up a so-called "**sufficiency strategy**" together with wide circles of the population, i.e. to work together on how we see good life tomorrow at community and individual levels - with less consumption;
- make our **towns and cities and recreational areas again more liveable for humans**: by a harmonious planning of new parts of settlement districts, of streets and public places as attractive and also child-friendly habitats that invite the visitor to stay and linger; by a consistent greening of the urban environment; by the conscious promotion of new forms of togetherness, from the "sharing economy" to new living forms (consortium of building clients, multi-generation houses...);
- **reinforce the link between environmental and health policy**: the right to claim tranquillity (vs. noise) and darkness (vs. light pollution), to breathe a healthy air and to enjoy a good water quality a.s.o. as essential elements of health promotion.



4 Recognizing the opportunities of climate protection and considering them as a challenge ...

... rather than seeing the implementation of a sustainable energy and climate policy as a constraint and minimizing the danger of climate changes

Hardly a development such as climate change threatens our entire eco-system - as well as the lives of millions of people - to such an extent. Despite numerous international meetings and agreements the world community risks to miss the goal of limiting global warming to 2 degrees (whereby a limit of 1.5 degrees would be required). In order to achieve this goal, a consistent transformation of our social and economic model is essential. Other significant social, cultural and economic opportunities for a more sustainable future will arise from it.

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- the obligations of the Paris agreement (to limit global warming well below 2 degrees) will be met;
- Luxembourg fully assumes its responsibility: in order to realize both the reduction of CO₂ emissions and the increase of energy efficiency, as also the increase of the share of renewable energy in the energy mix as priorities on the national territory;
- people recognize that a real climate protection cannot only be achieved with technical measures, but that it also requires new economic and life models.

We expect the next government to

- **draw up and adopt a national climate protection law**, which represents a regulatory framework with binding reduction targets in various areas (transport, industry, agriculture, housing...);
- **introduce a CO₂ tax**, as other countries already did (Denmark, Sweden, France,...);
- **promote concrete initiatives in the area of climate protection**: starting with a consistent withdrawal from the fuel tourism and the promotion of alternatives to the internal combustion engine, beyond a consequent reduction of energy consumption, up to the stop of climate and environmental-unfriendly investments of public funds.

5 Preserving our natural habitats as a foundation of the quality of life for the future generations ...

... instead of considering the protection of nature as an impediment to infrastructure projects and continuing to destruct our natural environment

A wide variety of species and habitats, an intact cultural landscape, fertile soil, good water quality and so forth are not only indispensable elements for the well-being of the people, but also simply the livelihoods of future generations. Sadly the overexploitation of the latter continues unabated, due to alleged constraints, such as the development of infrastructures and of residential areas, the economic growth, but also a more intensive agriculture. If we want to preserve the livelihoods for the next generations, a fundamental change in thinking is imperative!

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- the focus of our social goals increasingly shifts to the importance of an unspoiled nature and environment as well as a consistent water protection;
- safeguarding natural habitats and cultural landscapes becomes a top priority in political practice.

We expect the next government to

- **take into account the impact on the natural environment in all political decision-making processes**, including through the introduction of a sustainability check for government decisions;
- **set compulsory planning requirements**, among others with regard to a reduction of land consumption and avoidance of further urban sprawl;
- **lead a public debate on current conflicts of interest and possible solutions** (including the fields of conflict "settlement development vs. conservation" or "agriculture vs. nature and environmental protection");
- establish a **"biodiversity pact"** between the State and local authorities – based on the model of the «climate pact»;
- initiate a **fundamental reorientation of agricultural policy** in the sense of sustainable and organic production methods.



⑥ Promoting a medium-sized and regional farming in the respect of nature, environment and animal protection ... *... instead of tolerating the pressure of a global market and the exploitation of nature and beast*

The present agricultural policy that is increasingly focused on the global market is carried out not only at the expense of our natural resources, but also at the expense of the farmers who experience more and more pressure. For the latter it is a continuous balancing act between the demand of a global market for cheap prices, on one hand, and the demand for high quality food production, and respect of animal welfare and requirements in terms of nature and environmental protection, on the other hand. It is a fact that the current agricultural policy is responsible - to a large extent - for the dramatic loss of species and habitats, for the pollution of soil and drinking water a.s.o.

In this respect, a fundamental transformation of the agricultural policy, that gives an absolute priority to both the interests of farmers and consumers (and of the public in general), is indispensable.

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- Luxembourg will defend the interests of a medium-sized, regional agriculture, EU-wide and in international trade contracts;
- consumers and producers are increasingly brought together, thus promoting the awareness for the importance of agriculture in modern society;
- our country targets an agricultural policy that is focused – in all areas - on the demands of sustainability and, in particular, of a strong regionalisation.

We expect the next government to

- show a consistent commitment in the upcoming **reform of EU agricultural policy for a fundamental reorientation of European agricultural policy**, focussing on sustainable development on a regional level;
- fully exploit the national latitudes (that are further extended by this reform) for a **reinforced binding of funding on criteria such as protection of nature, soil, water and animal welfare**;
- **promote with priority organic farming, as well as a "space bound" agriculture**, i.e. an agriculture (largely) without feed imports and with processing chains that aim at a reinforced valorisation of our agricultural production;
- **promote a social debate on our food production and eating habits**;
- adopt concrete regulations for a **solid animal protection** in the field of livestock farming;
- **convene a round table to create an agricultural mission statement or action plan with all social actors**, both to combine the interests of consumers and producers, and to induce an increased autonomy or an economic added value in the food production and food processing.

7 Affordable and decent homes for everyone instead of housing shortage and a supremacy of private property

For years, all parties have considered the housing problem as the central political challenge, however: not so much progress is recognizable in practice. Key issues - such as the importance of private property over the general interests, the insufficient mobilization of land, the avoidance of a diffuse urban sprawl (including rural regions), the integration of new residential areas in existing villages a.s.o. - remain unsolved.

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- in addition to private possession, the focus of attention shifts more to the right to housing;
- the State and the municipalities increasingly take an active role in the sense of a more offensive housing policy;
- new social, space-saving and sustainable living and settlement forms are supported (beautifully and strongly greened residential areas, social mix, residential and construction types that meet the needs of people in various situations) as well as new housing models (cooperatives, consortium of building clients...).

We expect the next government to

- incorporate the **right to housing into the Constitution**, as well as **the primacy of the general interest against special private interests**, this to clearly defined and limited criteria;
- **create a national or several regional public housing associations in order to operate an active housing policy**, as well as the provision of the necessary funds;
- **create fiscal and tax policy incentives**, as well as an extension or exploitation of the right of first refusal in order to mobilize land and vacant houses;
- **take into account regional planning requirements as part of regional settlement development** (including priority residential areas, internal development before external development);
- **promote very actively new living and settlement forms and new residential models.**

8 Drawing the attention to a people-friendly mobility: soft mobility and public transport as key priorities instead of „serving two masters“

The organisation of our mobility is in many respects shaping the quality of life: traffic jams, crowded buses or trains / bad connections, increasing traffic noise and unattractive streets in our towns dominate our everyday life. A real quantum leap can only be achieved if we move away from this "duplication" that some politicians are so fond of, politicians who (still) surrender to the illusion that it is possible to develop both, at the same time, road traffic and public transport/soft mobility.

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- the public spaces of our neighbourhoods and villages (roads, squares) are turned into living spaces for residents, instead of being subject to the constraints of individual transport.
- a model of the mobility of tomorrow is developed, in which the 'active' mobility and public transport are designed in an attractive and appealing way, motivating more and more citizens to use them in everyday life.

We expect the next government to

- guarantee an **absolute prioritization of all funds on the expansion of active mobility, as well as of public transport** – and moreover a stop of all (planned) bypass roads and major road construction projects;
- **incorporate the Greater Region** into a sustainable coordinated mobility strategy - with the aim of significantly improving the modal split;
- create a **fundamental right on mobility**, which allows people to live their lives and mobility even without private cars;
- promote a **residential development** in our communities, which far more than ever includes the mobility aspects - also in partial development plans – and which is in line with the objectives of general regional planning;
- guarantee the consistent promotion of a **transformation of public places and streets** as part of a multi year plan;
- promote **concepts** such as the car-sharing initiative, or innovative company mobility concepts, that **save motorised private transport.**

9 A civil society as a pre-condition for a future-oriented society instead of a model that is based too much on the principle of a representative democracy

A profound change in our social and cultural model demands a fundamental rethinking which requires the consent of the people. Targets, such as the reduction of CO₂ emissions for instance, cannot be achieved with sole efficiency measures, but require also a different lifestyle and different consumer behaviour.

At the same time, it seems that there is a growing feeling of disenchantment with politics or a powerlessness of the individual in relation to political and economic developments, and growing social imbalances as well.

The challenge par excellence lies in an exchange between all groups of the population – in the interest of social cohesion – in the acceptance of (sometimes difficult) decision processes and in the allowance of a (as wide as possible) basis to social development. Above all, we must succeed in taking advantage of the potential of numerous people for policy-making, thus also promoting cooperation, and allowing all people (across all generations) living in Luxembourg to participate in the policy-making process. (Political) Education, both at the curricular/extra-curricular and informal level, plays a key role here.

As Mouvement Ecologique, we are committed to ensuring that

- beyond a basic knowledge transfer, more (young) people are enabled to develop social values and to get involved in the society together with other people;
- an inclusive (participative) cultural, educational and media policy is taken, which aims at attracting and including deliberately all groups within the population;
- political education (and education for sustainable development in particular) becomes a specific school mission;
- the principle of a participative opinion and decision-making on all levels of decision-making and action areas will increasingly be implemented by the political representatives;
- the Chamber of Deputies is best organized and structured, so it can meet effectively its role as executive body of the elected representatives of the Luxembourgish population.

We expect the next government to

- **clearly commit to a broad civic participation**, in the sense of a **real civil society**;
- **create liberties and freedoms** in the sense of an opening of educational institutions (including in the framework of the school curriculum) onto the society and the challenges of our time;
- **develop a broad culture of citizen participation** at local and national level, and participatory forms of school development;
- **revalue the parliamentary mandate** in the sense that a dual mandate "Alderman Councillor / Deputy" (or any other job activity) will no longer be possible in the future. Deputy must be a full time job.
- substantially improve the **functioning of the Chamber of Deputies**, by enlarging the qualified staff for the treatment of various political topics and files. This is the only way the deputies can meet their responsibilities;
- **extend the right to information for citizens**, stipulating an offensive public information policy and admitting broad rights for citizens in the sense of the "freedom of information act";
- introduce the **«popular initiative»** ("initiative populaire");
- establish a **strategy for the promotion of voluntary work, as well as to introduce paid vacation - "congé associatif"** - in order to strengthen voluntary commitment.

