



Position paper

Annual Meeting 18.-20. of May 2018 Stockholm

The German-Nordic Social Democratic Youth Network ('GNSDY'), represented by the participating delegations from our member district associations

- **Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Ungdomsförbund (SSU) Stockholm** (*host*)
- **Danmarks Socialdemokratiske Ungdom (DSU) Sydjylland**
- **Demarinuoret (DN) Helsinki**
- **Arbeidernes Ungdomsfylking (AUF) Oslo**
- **Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Jungsozialistinnen und Jungsozialisten in der SPD (Jusos) Flensburg, Nordfriesland & Steinburg**

has agreed on the following positions after the Annual Meeting from 18th until 20th of May 2018 in Stockholm. These positions were reached after concentrated work in five working groups; 1) Environmental politics, 2) Educational politics, 3) Health politics, 4) Financial politics, 5) Migration politics. Each working group consisted of one representative from each district association and one expert. The experts were the following:

1. Environmental: *Johanna Salmi* (S), Engineer in Urban Management, Former Chair of Social Democratic Students at the Royal Institute of Technology
2. Educational: *Olle Burell* (S), Commissioner of Education, Stockholm Municipality
3. Health: *Dag Larsson* (S), Commissioner in Opposition, Health, Stockholm County
4. Financial: *Roger Persson Österman* (S), Professor at Stockholms Universitet, Head of Tax Law programme
5. Migration: *Serkan Köse* (S), MP, National Parliament (Riksdagen)



1) Environmental politics

We are the last generation to save our planet. Therefore, we need to change the way we view our society and economy. As Social Democrats in GNSDY, we claim a **circular economy** which is based on recycling and reusing materials. We need to increase the usage of **environmental friendly services and transportation** and focus on **environmental friendly industries**. Our **energy** in the future must be **renewable and emission-free**. Coal- and gas-fired power stations must be replaced with renewable ones in an economically justifiable way.

Cars play a huge part in our daily life; 12% of the emissions in the European Union are produced by cars. In addition to ever-increasing emissions, this phenomenon causes air pollution in the bigger cities. **Improving public transportation** is one important factor but GNSDY recognizes that there always will be people living in areas which are not feasible to address by public transport. Hence, we aim for environmental-friendly cars. GNSDY demands an increased speed of change towards an increase in the number of **electric cars**. This needs governmental support and can be achieved by e.g. financial incentives such as **tax reliefs** when purchasing electronic cars. Additionally, GNSDY demands increased funding for research within the area of e-mobility. Furthermore, GNSDY demands increased focus on improving **fuel-cell technology and hybrid cars**.

Concerning **public transportation**, GNSDY demands investment in trains, busses and subways. Step by step we should gradually **move towards partly-free public transportation**. Target groups should be; children, students, unemployed, pensioners and people with baby strollers.

GNSDY demands to **tackle global warming** with greater efforts. Considering this major problem, we need to lay greater focus on **food and its' production**. The key factors in reducing **greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture** are using reusable energy sources in farms, reducing the use of fertilizers and using methane that comes from manure as fuel. We should also emphasize a **vegetarian diet**. Some **schools** in the Nordic countries have **one meat-free lunch per week**. This stands as a great example of introducing a vegetarian diet to young people and at the same time cutting emissions. GNSDY demands that the **public sector** as a whole follows this concept and introduces vegetarian food at least once a week in public cafeterias within nurseries, hospitals, public administration offices, and universities.

As Social Democrats we naturally have a greater focus on the public sector. The public sector should be a trendsetter and focus on **CO2 neutral buildings** and **purchase sustainably**. **Climate aspects** shall be a major focus point of the public sector. Every city should have its' own **local climate representative** who focuses on environmental issues within the concrete geographical area.



2) Educational Politics

One of the most important keystones towards a decent life is education. **Everyone has the right to an adequate education** and the capabilities to finish school with sufficient grades.

Today, some parents choose to keep their children at home instead of sending them to **kindergarten/preschool**, due to oftentimes high **tuition fees**. In Norway and Finland, parents get **financial supplements** from the state **for staying at home** with their children, which has led to a great number of children not attending preschool. These **wrongful financial incentives** particularly affect newly arrived immigrant mothers, since a great amount of them are unemployed. GNSDY demands that **all education**, starting from kindergarten/preschool until the end of university, **shall be free of charge and mandatory**. Additionally, all **wrongful financial incentives** for parents who let their kids stay at home should be **abolished**.

GNSDY firmly believes that **all hours outside of school** should be **free time**. School should not be part of this time. Great amounts of **homework** stop students from relaxing and enjoying after-school activities. Therefore, GNSDY believes that **homework should be integrated into school hours**, through e.g. **homework-café**s or **study hours** during the day, so young people have significantly less to do in their spare time. GNSDY prefers **longer school days** than great amounts of homework outside school hours.

GNSDY recognizes that our today's educational systems badly take into consideration the **individual needs** of students arising by the simple fact that every person is different. A way to assure that all students gain the capabilities necessary to graduate from school, is **adapting education** with every students' individual needs. E.g. all students could be connected with **mentors** who assure that their students get all help needed. Furthermore, a **diversity in teaching methods** is needed. GNSDY demands an implementation of various teaching methods such as practical learning techniques, digital learning tools, and group projects within all courses.

All students should get the **needed amount of attention** from their teachers. To reach this goal, GNSDY demands the **number of students in each class reduced** to a feasible number. Hence, the number of teachers must be increased. At the same time, **teachers' time** should be **freed** as much as possible **from administrative work** in order to increase time for actual teaching by not increasing the overall workload. One solution for this problem is the implementation of **teachers' assistants**.

During the young ages, schools include several **practical and creative courses**, whereas in upper secondary school, timetables hold a remarkably lower number of creative courses if even some. All students should continuously have the possibility to express their creative side, which studies have shown to improve their overall school results. GNSDY



wants that **upper secondary school** programs include mandatory creative and practical subjects.

Young people, who choose to apply for **vocational education**, are required to fulfill an **apprenticeship** during their education. Still, it is especially in the Nordic countries difficult to find companies willing to accept these students. GNSDY calls for an **obligation** for **companies** to accommodate vocational students for apprenticeships.

The **focus of education** should be on **personal development** rather than results and accomplishments. Unfortunately, school still has a great focus on results which creates a huge amount of stress among students, since they feel like they have to constantly perform instead of being able to focus on learning. GNSDY demands **rethinking the traditional way of grading** and develop new methods. Additionally, student should get **constant feedback** from their teachers including concrete key points on how they can improve.

GNSDY recognizes the problem of **private schools** and advocates for the **abolishment of all public grants** to private schools. GNSDY views this is a step on the way to a private school-free school system. GNSDY opposes the existence of **religious private school**, since we believe in a secular state where religion is separated from public institutions like schools. Education about religion in schools should merely be explanatory and objective.

GNSDY recognizes the problem of **socioeconomic segregation** within societies. GNSDY suggests **bringing together people** from different socioeconomic backgrounds within the school setting in order to address this problem starting early in life. We are convinced that diversity within society and school is a strength.



3) Health politics

Based on the core values of social democracy (liberty, equity, solidarity), all members of GNSDY demand the **creation of equal healthcare for everyone**.

Under this umbrella, GNSDY discussed the role of **private insurances** in our publicly funded healthcare systems. GNSDY agrees that private insurances need to be limited as far as possible and if implemented regulated strongly in order to secure publicly provided healthcare. GNSDY is not in favor of completely abolishing private insurances, since we feel that additional private insurances (*besides* of the public insurance!) for not-needed services, as e.g. homeopathy, should be free to purchase. However, it shall not be possible to purchase private insurance, which replaces the public insurance and by that also buys these patients greater benefits compared to those being merely publicly insured. Public insurance for everybody needs to be the standard and must not be levered out by private insurances.

Furthermore, equal healthcare is a question of geographical accessibility. In order to overcome potential barriers due to long distances, GNSDY demands increased efforts concerning the implementation of **digitalization (e.g. Telemedicine)**. Besides this, GNSDY demands that, for those patients living in urban and remote areas, easy transportations routes and cost-free travel possibilities to healthcare facilities are installed.

Additionally, GNSDY recognizes the problem of fragmentation within healthcare services, oftentimes leading to confusion amongst patients, where to go when initially accessing the healthcare system. Following the Danish example, the concept of “**Health houses**” (**‘Sundhedshuse’**) is recognized as possible solution to tackle this problem. By centralizing several services “under one roof” it shall be easier for the patients to access the right services. GNSDY sees the introduction of a general practitioner-based **gatekeeping-system** as inevitable in order to tackle fragmentation, increase collaboration and decrease costs by better steering the patients’ pass through the healthcare system.

Furthermore, GNSDY recognizes and emphasizes the great inequity in accessibility to healthcare introduced by so-called **co-payments**. GNSDY demands all co-payments at doctor’s visits removed - at least those for visiting the general practitioner. Co-payments affect especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. This does not align with the core values of Social Democracy.

As brought forward by the delegation from Jusos, **dental care** is to a great extent covered by the public insurances in Germany. GNSDY follows this concept and demands to include dental care into the publicly funded healthcare systems in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland.

As one major topic of concern, all members of GNSDY raised the topic of **mental illness** (especially amongst young people). On the exposure side (=before an illness has



occurred), GNSDY strongly demands greater prevention efforts, the introduction of screening for mental illness by using pre developed tests in high schools twice a year (as in Norway), and decrease the pressure on the young generation in order to give them the needed time to grow up. On the outcome side (=once the illness has occurred), GNSDY demands all psychiatric *and* psychological treatment to be included in publicly funded healthcare (as in Germany).

Long waiting queues were recognized as major topic of concern by the Nordic members. Germany luckily stands out as one of the countries with the shortest waiting queues worldwide. In order to improve within this area, GNSDY demands to improve public spending and organizational systems in healthcare by **dividing up administrative responsibilities** so that medical experts not also are administrative leaders. Furthermore, the creation of **separate systems** for emergency care and elective care has to be enhanced. A gatekeeping system and increased **emphasis on primary care**, as in Denmark, is viewed as one factor to tackle this problem.

GNSDY emphasizes the importance of creating a **better workplace** for healthcare personnel and demands a **payment** which reflects the true value of their work for all healthcare practitioners, and decreasing the pressure from **austerity endeavors**. Concerning the recruitment of additional personnel, GNSDY demands that so-called '**brain drain**' (=headhunting well-educated healthcare personnel) from poorer countries is omitted.

GNSDY recognizes the great lack of **health literacy** amongst the general public. Based on this, GNSDY demands to **restructure health education** in schools by putting greater emphasis on courses in 'health & nutrition' and making sure that gym courses are fun instead of competition, so students actually want to go. Furthermore, GNSDY is greatly concerned about the rising rates of **sexual transmitted infections** among the younger generation. Hence, GNSDY demands to increase the awareness about the danger from STI's and emphasizing greater efforts concerning **sexual health education**. However, the latter should incorporate more than protection of pregnancies and STI's; GNSDY demands a better education and clarification concerning the topics of **consent, rape, and sexual abuse**.

GNSDY furthermore recognizes the problem of so-called "**Dr. Google**". As suggested by our health politics expert, Dag Larsson, we demand the introduction of **health apps** such as "Babylon", developed by the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK.

Finally, GNSDY demands that **vaccinations**, as part of the routine children's-vaccination-programs, shall be **mandatory**. However, due to increased traveling within the free area of the EU, GNSDY demands a **European wide** mandatory introduction of vaccinations.



4) Financial Politics

Combating tax havens

Large corporations **avoid taxes** through the use of tax havens such as the Cayman Islands and Guernsey. This massive undermining of the tax system hurts the welfare state and thereby must be liquidated.

Many banks help these large corporations stash away their riches in a tax havens. Therefore, a solution to the problem would be to **establish the best possible whistleblower protection** that is to say giving legal protection to people with relevant information about tax dodgers. GNSDY would also like to see the European Union use their blacklisting power to penalize tax dodging corporations with economic sanctions and similar punitive actions.

In addition to these measures, the **penalties for economic crimes** should be stronger. An economic crime does as much, if not more, harm as all other types of crimes. A bank or financial advisor should also be punished if they help someone commit an economic crime through the use of tax havens.

Creating an EU minimum corporation tax

All countries want companies to settle in their countries. As **incentives** they **lower their corporate tax** to attract these companies. This creates a ‘race to the bottom’ where countries are battling each other to achieve the lowest tax. This is a practice which is carried out by a lot of different countries, notably Ireland, and it needs to be regulated. A ‘race to the bottom’ only serves to do harm.

This is why GNSDY demands the introduction of a **minimum corporate tax in the European Union**. We believe that this tax would prevent a ‘race to the bottom’ in at least the European Union and possibly also states that are associated with it, such as in Norway and Switzerland. With the EU introducing this rule, potentially additional outside the EU countries would follow, especially since many members of the EU are major economic players.

The minimum corporation tax should be **at least 20%**, but the exact figure should be determined by the European Parliament in co-operation with the national governments, independent of financial interests.

Creating a progressive inheritance tax

A large amount of rich people earns their money not through hard work, but through large inheritances. If we want to call ourselves ‘*the workers’ movement*’, we need to put an end to that people earn a fortune without working one day in their life. This does not align with the social democratic core value of equity.



Therefore, GNSDY believes that Germany and the Nordic countries must install inheritance taxes following general principles. The inheritance tax should **start at approx. 50.000 € and progressively continue.**

A progressive inheritance tax is a prerequisite for a fair and just society in which everyone has to work to earn the money for living. Basically; if you did not work for it, you did not earn it. It is of utmost importance that **these taxes do not affect the working class.**

Creating a financial transaction tax

Financial transactions are not taxed. However, if they were taxed by all member states in the EU, the welfare states could acquire additional funding from the very richest people in our society. Based on this, GNSDY demands the introduction of an **EU-wide financial transaction tax.**

The taxation of financial transactions will presumably not affect the working class and ordinary citizens, as they usually do not speculate in stocks. However, the richest people in society often act as speculators, who earn their money on the stock market. They will hence be **forced to contribute to the welfare state.**

The tax should be **0.1% of the exchange of stocks and 0.01% of the derivatives** of stocks as proposed by the EU Commission. The tax should be collected by each member state and not by the European Union.



5) Migration politics

The huge migration movements from 2015 affected all member countries from GNSDY but in different ways. Based on this it was established very early that opinions on this topic differ between the members of GNSDY.

However, GNSDY agrees that we need a more Social Democratic approach to **asylum politics**. Based on this, GNSDY considers the following approaches:

The increasing number of refugees worldwide calls for an **increase of development aid**, in particular for funding of refugee camps and the UNHCR. GNSDY asks the developed countries worldwide to increase their funding aligning with the **UN-goal of 1% of GDP**. Furthermore, GNSDY wants the existing refugee agencies **UNHCR and UNRWA to be combined** under one umbrella organization. GNSDY recognizes that one of the most problematic aspects of today's migration politics is the unequal distribution of efforts between countries. Therefore, GNSDY demands to **create a quota system at either UN or EU-level**, based on what is feasible. The Danish and Norwegian delegations propose the option of replacing the national asylum systems with a European asylum system. Following a Social Democratic approach based on equity and solidarity, GNSDY recognizes that **today's system oftentimes favors those migrants with best financial resources**, who can pay for the expensive and dangerous travels to Europe. GNSDY wants to prioritize quota refugees based on needs. GNSDY emphasizes today's risks of migrating into Europe unacceptable and underlines the need for **other methods of seeking asylum**. GNSDY demands that refugees should have the possibility to **seek for asylum** in Europe within countries **outside of Europe**; e.g. in refugee camps and embassies. GNSDY demands for **greater efforts to target human traffickers**, e.g. through Interpol.

The integration of refugees poses a challenge to our societal systems. GNSDY calls for a Social Democratic approach and proposes the following approaches:

In order to making integration easier, housing policies need to be reviewed. **Mixing housing and creating diverse living areas** are essential in order to make it possible for migrants to integrate. This will in turn create more diverse schools, which will lead to better integration. GNSDY recognizes the importance of **crisis centers for women**. Fighting against negative **social control and honorary culture** stands out as an important part of gender equality politics. **GNSDY calls for an openness in dialogue** about topics like this. GNSDY recognizes that **integration is more than learning a new language**. We believe that culture, values and other essential parts of our societies must play a bigger role in the educational programs for newcomers.