



GREEN

DEAL

FOR SERBIA

TOGETHER FOR SERBIA - PARTY PROGRAM

July 2021.

FOR SERBIA, TOGETHER

The political, economic, and social situation in Serbia requires the urgent mobilisation of all political organisations, movements, and citizens, that want a dignified life. Now is the time to defend our democracy **together**. Now is the time to stand against all larger social divides, inequalities and hate speech, which have occupied our public space. The basic foundations of our survival are shaken up, while the perspectives of ordinary people are endangered. That is why the time has come to fight **together** for social justice, for the respect of human rights, and the preservation of our natural environment. Citizens have lost faith in political parties and institutions, as well as the belief that change is possible. Our task now is to convince them that change is indeed possible and that **together** we can block the way to authoritarianism, populism, and injustice.

By bringing together a wide front around a civic platform open to political parties, civic and ecological movements, associations, unions, and individuals, we will provide support to citizens who are currently left to fend for themselves and **together** we will offer voters a political program that envisions economic and social development for all. Politics cannot depend on the will and mercy of one person or one party. For this reason, we want to create a new political environment in which the principles of solidarity and responsibility towards the public interest and citizens will overcome the dominant model of partocratic, private, and selfish interests that violate the basis of a healthy and democratic society.



3 POINTS: OUR STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

- 1. NEW PEOPLE IN POLITICS** – Serbia needs new energy and new people, who are unburdened by the past, who are not responsible for missed opportunities, and who are genuinely committed to sustainable development.
- 2. SERBIA IN THE WEST** – We advocate for a single pillar of Serbia’s foreign policy. There is no strong Serbia if the country does not hold the same principles as Western democracies. Respecting human, civic, and political rights and freedoms are the foundation of a strong state. This is also a prerequisite for economic progress. New investments, better paid jobs, increased budget revenues, significant progress in education and healthcare – all of these are only possible if our country undergoes necessary changes. Partnerships with the European Union and the United States of America are the natural path to stability, democracy, and a healthy economy based on the rule of law.
- 3. SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF THE KOSOVO ISSUE** – Time does not work in Serbia’s advantage. The last thirty years are marked by decades of missed opportunities. There is no perspective or indication that there will be a better time for this issue to be resolved in 5 or 10 years. It is in our national interest, and in the interest of all citizens that we find a solution. We seek to be included in this process.



OUR GOALS:

- 1.** Improving the quality of life in line with our ecological responsibility to current and future generations;
- 2.** Reducing all types of inequality: social, economic, legal, regional, as well as unequal access to public services and goods;
- 3.** Realising a decentralised and local-driven type of development;
- 4.** Strengthening Serbia's energetic and agricultural independence and sustainability;
- 5.** Unconditionally protecting natural resources and phasing out the use of fossil fuels;
- 6.** Improving education and science, contemporary cultural and artistic creativity by supporting research, innovation, and freedom of expression;
- 7.** Encouraging economic democracy – decreasing precarious work and strengthening the negotiating power of workers through quality regulation of labour relations and union organising;
- 8.** Defining developmental priorities in open democratic processes with citizen involvement;
- 9.** Strengthening the key drivers of a social state: education, social services, healthcare, and culture;
- 10.** Modernising the public infrastructure and defending public goods and services from privatisation and deregulation;
- 11.** Reforming the existing social security following the principles of universality, emancipation and equality, with a particular focus on gender equality;
- 12.** Ensuring gender equality in all domains of life, preventing and fighting gender-based violence and domestic violence;
- 13.** Advocating for feminism in politics through the principle of a gender balance in taking on tasks and responsibilities, greater participation of women in the contribution to democracy through non-violent communication and action;

- 14.** Protecting the basic rights and freedoms of every individual no matter their origin, nationality, religion, race, political orientation, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other identifier;
- 15.** Creating a just and progressive tax system, while respecting the realistic possibilities of citizens;
- 16.** Strengthening and returning trust in public institutions;
- 17.** Fighting the clientelism and corruption that have captured the state and society since the start of the 1990s, and have put them in service of private rather than public interests;
- 18.** Organising the administrative apparatus as a public service, which responds to the needs of citizens;
- 19.** Implementing a genuine decentralisation, including local self-governments and the autonomous province of Vojvodina, to ensure that they have the necessary resources for local-driven development;
- 20.** Creating open and transparent governing structures with well-developed citizen accountability mechanisms and other forms of citizen inclusion in decision-making;
- 21.** Strengthening democratic institutions and improving various forms of representative and direct democracy.



GREEN POLICIES IN SERBIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Our program is based on the vision of a green development plan for Serbia. Our economic and social policies are forward looking with the aim to create a just, green, solidaric and prosperous society.

These days, ideas on the green transition are recognised across the developed world as the only solution for our survival and a secure future for all generations. It is these ideas that we will advocate for. Our 'Green Deal for Serbia' is inspired by the path taken by the "European Green Deal". This entails a **pivot towards a green economy**, which will create new employment opportunities. Such an economy can create the right circumstances for social and generational justice, as well as a democracy that includes citizens in decision-making rather than using them as a means to solidify certain political elites. A green economy is based on the respect of the rule of law and diversity in society. It is not just a vision for a kinder and better society, but also a pragmatic response to societal needs. Today, European values have taken an even more concrete shape. These are values that are leading humanity to a sustainable future, a healthy environment, and a high quality of life for ordinary citizens. Thanks to its geographical location and natural resources, Serbia still has the chance to become a developed and modern country that can give its citizens a secure future, provided that we embark on this green transition without delay. The current developmental politics of the Government of Serbia are outdated, based on old and dirty technologies, the reduction of green areas, and construction that boosts the construction industry in the short-term, but takes away our perspectives for the long-term. We want to engage with contemporary visions of development, which are based on a green and **circular economy**. This economic model is based on the rational and sustainable use of our energy, water, and food sources. In addition, it enables new and high-quality employment opportunities.

Our survival is connected to the limited sources of energy, water, and food available to us. We must use them more rationally and efficiently. Our economy currently depends on the over-usage and destruction of our natural resources, hyper-production, single-use products, and the creation of enormous amounts of waste resulting from the uncontrolled disposal of everyday products. That is why Serbia must join European endeavours that lead to this model of a sustainable, circular economy that makes the most of renewable resources and preserves non-renewable ones. Just like the EU, Serbia must invest in **renewable energy sources**, improve recycling, and prohibit harmful pesticides. Instead of constantly using too many resources, we must learn to use our resources in a smarter and measured way. We want products to last longer and to be easier to repair by increasing the duration of guarantees to combat their obsolescence. We must stop companies from throwing away edible food as if it is waste. Plastic that cannot be

recycled must be taxed or prohibited, while sustainable alternatives and recycling options must be developed. We will advocate for strict limitations on the import of waste and the introduction of taxes on the extraction of raw materials. We will ensure investments in renewable energy sources. We will improve the recycling system. We will **prohibit dangerous chemicals** and harmful pesticides. We will introduce specific regulations for the management of packaging waste, glass packaging, food waste, and the resolution of the wastewater problem. We will introduce a special system of environmental fees - from fines for environmental pollution, to taxes in the field of transport and energy.

As a signatory of the Paris Climate Accord, Serbia has to accept its share of the responsibility. We need a **new energy and climate strategy, which will be ambitious, realistic, but also implemented** – this will include new standards and measures that will make up for the large delay in the preservation of the environment and which will enable investment in the green industry. Citizens want clean air, which requires a series of measures, but above all the reduction of industrial pollution.

Taking action on the climate and economic growth are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary. Investing in new green technologies will create new employment opportunities, boost innovation, and ensure a secure future. New, green technologies will have precedence in Serbia, while polluters will be required to compensate for all the harm that they inflict on the environment.

In order to achieve its climate goals, Serbia must move towards its goals to **abolish fossil fuels by 2050, in addition to the closure of thermal power plants**. The use of fossil fuels does not have a future, while creating significant health problems in the present. It is important for Serbia to make this transition as soon as possible, with the first task being to gradually reduce and abolish the extraction and use of lignite, a low-calorie coal.

The fight against **energy poverty** must become our first priority. Our aim is to help poorer households to switch to cleaner ways of heating. Investing in energy efficiency will lead to decreased consumption. We will support public investments in and subsidies to social, accessible, and energy efficient housing. **Energy efficiency**, energy savings and the introduction of clean energies must be at the centre of our energy policy. Switching to renewable energy, such as wind and solar energy, will reduce pollution, create employment opportunities, and empower citizens to play a more active role. We will introduce a holistic ban on the construction of small, derivative hydro-power plants on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, given that this way of producing electricity accounts for an extremely small percentage of the total energy production, while its effects on the natural environment are catastrophic.

We will introduce a system to precisely assess and monitor harmful gas emissions. We will also introduce a special tax on harmful gases. At the same time, the state must make a precise cost analysis and action plan detailing the steps towards the abolition of coal. Citizens must have the right **information** about the state of the natural environment and participate in decision-making on its protection. We will introduce mechanisms for the constant, timely and transparent measurement of the concentration of all pollutants in the air, water, and soil. To the extent necessary, we will apply concrete measures that will ensure citizen respect and polluter accountability.

Better consumer protection is also needed, which means properly informing people about the contents of their food, where it comes from, and how it is produced. We will take care of natural resources, alongside the imperative to improve the quality of land, water, and air without their degradation for generations to come.

Creating the future agricultural policy of the country will be an inclusive process, which will ensure the participation of all relevant actors in the country's agribusiness sector, from farmers and cooperatives, through agribusiness companies, to universities and agricultural research organisations, with the full contribution of the civil society sector engaged in agriculture.

The starting principles of the future agricultural policy of Serbia will be:

- (1.) More money for agriculture through an increase in the agrarian budget. If Serbia were in the EU today, it could count on four times more money for agriculture.
- (2.) The simplification, acceleration, and introduction of full transparency in the payment of agricultural subsidies.
- (3.) Agriculture will be recognized as a key factor in the field of environmental protection.
- (4.) The creation of agricultural policy measures that will stimulate the start-up of new and long-term development of existing businesses in agribusiness, instead of buying short-term social peace in Serbia.
- (5.) According to official statistics, Serbia irrigates about 3% of its area - one of the lowest percentages in Europe. Building an irrigation system with government funds will be one of the priorities.
- (6.) Digital agriculture - from smart irrigation, through precision agriculture, to sophisticated weather forecasts - digital solutions make agribusiness more cost-effective, more predictable, and increasingly resistant to weather

conditions. New technologies can be easily accessible to our farmers as well, especially with the help of state subsidies.

We will redirect agricultural subsidies to **sustainable agriculture**. Our plan includes subsidies to all farmers in the amount of 200 euros per hectare, provision of water for irrigation to every field, electricity for irrigation in each area, 50% of grants for all investments in agriculture paid in advance, and agricultural loans with 1% interest.

Although Serbia is still not a member of the EU, it has an interest in its **agricultural policy being fully compatible with that of the EU** in the years leading up to membership. All EU standards related to agricultural products, primarily food, in terms of quality and shelf life, will be valid in Serbia, so that domestic products will not face unfair competition. Harmonisation with the EU will enable Serbia to present itself on the world stage as an exporter that offers the quality and standards of the EU, but at a lower price, so trade with non-EU countries, particularly in the Western Balkans region, will be increased. Compatibility with the EU (even in the years when Serbia is not yet a member) will guarantee the ability to make full use of EU funds both in the pre-accession phase and in the first years of EU membership (and the past experience of newly acceded EU countries shows that this was usually not the case due to their lack of preparation).



CITIZENS AT THE CENTRE OF POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING

The foundation of democratic green policies is enabling direct citizen participation. We will fight for the realisation of our program through a **new type of politics**. A type of politics that welcomes the widest circle of citizens and restores trust in political processes and democratic institutions.

Our Program is based on the rule of law and genuine respect for human rights. **Defending the rule of law**, the principle of the separation of powers, and the battle against authoritarian leaders and populist lies are our priority and we must advocate for this **together**. The rights of the opposition, or political minorities, must be confirmed in practice. Similarly, the rights of all minorities must be ensured, and any discrimination strongly prevented.

We need a change in the dominant political environment. We need a **new political culture**, which is not based on the will and mercy of the powerful, but on law and justice. We want to support civil society organisations, independent media, investigative journalists and ensure that they can carry out their work independently. Democracy can only function when it is supported by **freedom of speech and independent media**. We want to increase support for investigative journalism and defend journalists who are under pressure. Only **together** can we protect activists, journalists, and whistleblowers who uncover important information in the public interest. We want a lively democracy at all levels: from local to regional and national. We must **defend ourselves against violence**, blackmail, undue influence on the will of the electorate, and those that spread misinformation and incite hatred. We will fight for that by all democratic means, from institutional pathways to civil protests.

Therefore, we must apply the constitutional principle of the **separation of powers**, which includes a strong National Assembly, a government accountable to its citizens, and an independent judiciary. For us, a good government simply means a well-controlled government.

Therefore, following the example of countries that have successfully dealt with this problem, we are in favour of the **introduction of primary elections**. True change is possible only if we restore people's trust that their vote means something, that their constitutional right to vote and to be elected is real, and that it remains the only possibility for citizens to influence political decisions. Through primary elections, we create a visible alternative to the governing structure based on the power of one man. We want to choose freely and fairly who will lead the fight against such a government. The primary elections revive the democratic political scene, open space for new ideas and uncorrupted political representatives, mobilise activists and poll workers, and enable genuine political competition. Primary elections are also an additional guarantee that our political representatives will have greater accountability towards those who elected them.

Through primary elections, we are creating space for the **reform of the electoral system**. We want politicians to be accountable to citizens, not to the party leadership. Serbia will have more constituencies and the parliamentary elections will have a preferential proportional representation system, which implies the possibility of voting for a specific candidate on the party list. In local elections, mayors will be elected directly.

We want our political representatives to be those who will be committed to the implementation of the "Green Deal for Serbia".

Serbia needs a structurally **sustainable network of courts**, which will provide citizens with their constitutional right to have access to legal remedy. Structural reform is also needed in order to resolve backlogs of old and newly filed cases in accordance with the right of citizens to a speedy trial. The other two branches of government, especially the executive, must adhere to their legal obligation to maintain trust in the independence and impartiality of judges and courts through their behaviour. The fundamental reform of the prosecutor's office is of particular importance, as it must abandon the old Soviet model in which there is practically only one prosecutor who is truly independent - the National Public Prosecutor. For the prosecution to fulfil its role provided by the Constitution and the law, which is to prosecute perpetrators of criminal and other punishable offenses and to take measures to uphold the Constitution and the law, it must, in institutional and operational terms, exercise the necessary degree of control over the work of the police.

To this end, it is necessary to seriously consider the establishment of a special police unit, which is under the direct control of the public prosecutor's office, as adopted in many countries. The work of the public prosecutor's office must be as public as possible, given that there is often a justified interest of the public to be informed about the most significant steps taken in the criminal prosecution of certain persons. As part of these reforms, it is especially necessary to examine the effect of the existing organisational model of the Prosecutor's Office for Organised Crime and special anti-corruption departments of higher public prosecutor's offices in achieving the proclaimed legal goals of combating the most serious crimes. It is necessary to ensure the integrity, functionality, and independence of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia.

In cities and municipalities, we will introduce the principle of **direct decision-making by citizens** on the most important projects for them and their local communities. Large construction projects will only be able to be realised after appropriate consultations with local communities in which these projects are planned. Citizens, as taxpayers, have the right to manage money from the budget by choosing what will be created and developed with these revenues. Citizens must be informed about strategies of urban planning, rural development, and infrastructural investment. No one can deprive us of the right to the protection of natural habitats and our cultural and natural heritage

BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

The financial crisis, austerity policies, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have left millions of people around the world in poverty. In Serbia, more than 12 million people are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, while around half a million people live in absolute poverty, meaning that they don't have the money to cover their existential needs. **The fight against poverty** and the fight against inequality have to be the cornerstone of all economic and social policies. It is impossible to have economic and social development that results in increased poverty and the deterioration of public services. No one should be left behind, marginalised, or forgotten. Societal development is measured through the treatment of the most vulnerable members of society.

Everyone should have the right to a decent income and basic public services. We must reform the economic system to enable everyone to have the right to dignified work. New green jobs would channel billions into sustainable investments and innovation. In cooperation with trade unions, we want to provide a **living wage** - a minimum wage that is sufficient to provide for a dignified life.

Basic social rights such as access to health care, housing, and education are our priority.

In the area of **labour rights**, we want a Serbia where young people no longer have to choose between unemployment and emigration, where women are not discriminated against at work, and small business owners do not suffer from unfair tax competition or the pressure of party corruption. We need to develop a system and ensure funding for retraining, lifelong learning, and transitioning to new jobs, which will provide social security and alleviate insecurity. We support the right of workers to engage in collective bargaining and social dialogue, as well as to influence their position at work in an organised manner, through **trade unions**. We will fight against all forms of labour exploitation and forced labour.

We will insist on strengthening labour inspections and legislative guarantees for health and safety in the workplace. It is necessary to **regulate new forms of work**, flexible working hours, work through international platforms, and teleworking.

We will ensure a minimum wage that will cover basic existential needs.

According to official data, a Serbian citizen is expected to live five years less than a citizen of the European Union. We must first and foremost protect the health of our citizens by fighting air and water pollution and stopping plastic waste. There is a significant increase in diseases caused by environmental degradation and unhealthy lifestyles. Chemicals, hormones, nitrates or microplastics in our food chain pose a danger to our health. Destruction of natural habitats also affects the spread of new diseases and pandemics.

Universal health insurance, reducing inequalities in access to health services and medicines, is a civilisational goal. A **new health policy** should focus on the

prevention of physical and mental illnesses, and not only on their treatment. To implement this policy, we need to ensure a sufficient number of doctors per capita, as this number is currently in decline.

Primary health care and the ability to choose one's physician should be the basis of the health system.

Citizens should satisfy most of their health needs with their chosen physician in primary health care. Citizens should have the right to freely choose a physician in primary health care, regardless of whether they are in public or private practice.

Physicians in private practice should have the right to provide instructions and prescriptions as well as chosen physicians in state institutions. Specialist doctors in hospitals should also perform examinations in community health centres, in order to avoid unnecessarily sending patients from institution to institution. The National Health Insurance Fund (RFZO) should enable specialist diagnostics and treatment in private practices for all those health services that state institutions cannot provide or for which there are long waiting lists. The system of health cards (*zdravstvena knjizica*) should be abolished. Instead, it should be enough to have an ID card for the necessary health services. Chosen physicians should schedule specialist examinations and treatments and monitor the patient instead of citizens having to do this themselves. Citizens should be treated in high-quality centres specialised in certain areas of medicine, rather than all health centres offering all services. Health care institutions should be publicly ranked according to the results of their work so that citizens can be informed and have the opportunity to choose the best institution and the best doctors. Public health must be freed from the influence of politics and parties through the public selection of the most capable professionals to manage the healthcare system. Top-notch doctors should do their job, and capable managers should manage health facilities.



EDUCATION AND CULTURE AT THE CENTRE OF PUBLIC POLICIES

Education is a prerequisite for achieving developmental goals and economic and social progress. Without citizens who are educated, informed, and empowered with skills to improve their lives, who understand the world and get involved in political processes, progress is not possible. Investing in education is the most significant investment in the future. Therefore, we will increase the education budget to 7% because funding independent scientific research and innovation is our priority.

Primary and secondary education must be free and accessible to all. Higher education must be accessible to all and adapted to new challenges and the competitiveness of the global labour market. Modern education should enable people to develop the skills needed in the green information economy and enable them to adapt and respond to rapid changes in all aspects of life. Everyone should have the possibility of lifelong learning and career changes. By providing quality jobs and a lifelong learning system, we will make it easier and faster for our citizens to adapt to new working conditions

A modern Serbia cannot be built without **fact-based policies**. We want to significantly increase funding for independent research and innovation to meet major challenges and go hand in hand with the developed world. Therefore, we will encourage cooperation with foreign universities, scientific and research centres, and enable the exchange of students and scientists, using the available funds of the European Union.

At the elementary level, we want to establish an education system that will produce a functionally literate student who is able to think critically, who is educated to be competent and competitive in the future, as well as an active participant in the social life of the community. The changes we propose are: the continued reform of problem-based and project-based teaching; reducing the number of students per class; national testing in order to continuously monitor and evaluate students' achievements; reform of the curriculum (reduction of the number of classes and subjects in primary school); investment in existing schools; modernisation of equipment - everyone must have computers and internet access; scholarships for the best students.

Education relies on a motivated educator, who is valued and recognised by the community. This includes: better salaries; pay grades and the possibility of advancement which will be evaluated through the salary of the educator; evaluation of teachers' work in relation to student achievement (national testing); relieving educators of administrative work (changes in the systematisation of jobs and redistribution of work engagements); public recognitions of work-related achievements (according to clear criteria); changes to pedagogical tertiary education; establishing a clear and systematised selection procedure for the employment of educators (employment testing; changing the current system of state exams and licenses). The practice of obtaining fake university diplomas and doctorates must be stopped through the accreditation and ranking of higher

education institutions. We will guarantee the autonomy of the universities by preventing political influence, including by terminating the participation of political officials in university management.

The right to participate in cultural life is a basic human right. Investing in culture is not just supporting artists and cultural practitioners, but it is a long-term investment in independent, satisfied citizens. Therefore, we will increase the budget allocations for culture to 2%. Access to cultural content is a source of creativity, understanding, tolerance, as well as a sense of belonging and well-being. It is also of economic interest because the cultural sector employs people and creates new value. We are committed to the consistent implementation of international cultural conventions that guarantee cultural diversity, artistic freedom, and the protection of our cultural heritage, which, like our natural heritage, is inseparable from us and our existence.

Freedom of artistic expression is inviolable. We will provide funds for cultural programs and green infrastructure projects in culture. Our cultural institutions are not just buildings in which artists spend their working hours, but above all they are spaces for creativity and creation. We will identify abandoned industrial or military facilities and open new creative spaces for artists, for young people, and for all those who need a space to create, play, think, talk. We will provide funds to support creative industries, private exhibitions, and profitable initiatives for the development of tourism and entrepreneurship. Only the artistic programmes that take place within this framework will be eligible to apply for funding in the annual call for cultural support. We will pay special attention to independent artists and the independent scene, firstly by providing them with a social position, space, and means of work. We will provide funds for cultural education programmes and supporting young talents, because cultural interests are created from a young age. We will support innovative projects that connect art, architecture, and green construction as part of the sustainable development of Serbian cities for the 21st century. We will ensure the participation of cultural experts and citizens in decision-making on large infrastructure projects and other adaptations of public space. We are committed to taking the influence of political parties out of the cultural sector, especially in the selection of management staff. Leadership positions of cultural institutions will be open to all artists throughout Serbia.

Preparing society for a new time means investing in digital technologies, technological and media literacy for all generations, and internet access for everyone, including the most underdeveloped parts of Serbia.



We believe in the power of people to respect each other, regardless of different views, origins, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Despite the dominant discourse that is imposed on us, we know that there is still much more that connects us than what divides us. We will not allow diversity to be regarded as hostile. We must fight for equal rights for all and a genuine fight against all forms of discrimination.

By gathering a broad front dedicated to these ideas, we want to become the alternative that the citizens of Serbia need today. We will be a barrier to those who turn any well-intentioned criticism of the objective shortcomings of democratic institutions and the corruption that has entered all aspects of society and political parties, into an anti-European, extreme, and xenophobic withdrawal from Serbia's European path. Despite all obstacles and disappointments, we still consider the European project to be the most significant historical achievement of our time, and we will continue to fight for Serbia to become a member of the European Union.

The future is green.

We call on all citizens to support us in the fight for a better future.

