

From the Heart of Europe for a Strong Saxony  
in a Future-Resilient European Union

# European Strategy of the Saxon State Government

for the VIII Legislative Term of the Saxon State  
Parliament

- Summary -



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## Introduction

For Saxony, the European Union is a **guarantor of peace, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and prosperity**. In view of global crises – the war in Ukraine, geopolitical tensions, the energy transition and climate change, and migration – the Saxon State Government underscores the need for a strong and capable European Union. Only joint European action can safeguard our security and common values.

Since 1990, Saxony has seen itself as an **active shaper of European integration and a bridge-builder between East and West** – particularly through cooperation with Poland and the Czech Republic. Close cross-border partnerships, especially in the Euroregions, reflect this role.

Saxony and its neighbours are facing shared challenges such as **structural change, the energy transition, demographic shifts, climate impacts, and digital transformation**. These tasks require close and institutionalised cooperation. Developments at EU level must combine economic strength, ecological sustainability, social justice, and democratic participation. The State Government is committed to a European Union that reinforces global competitiveness, the internal market, industrial and cohesion policy, and sound financial structures, underpinned by the principles of the rule of law and social balance.

The EU is also the foundation of Saxony's economic future: **it enables growth, innovation, research, and employment, which are all together beneficial to rural areas of the Free State**.

Through this European Strategy, the **State Government aims to strengthen European cohesion, promote social participation, and create sustainable prospects for the future**. Its key goals are competitiveness, innovation, energy and supply security, modern infrastructure, climate protection, stable supply chains, and reduced bureaucracy. The Government reaffirms its commitment to the social market economy, the euro, and sound and future-oriented fiscal policy.

The strategy provides a **cross-sectoral framework for European policy orientation** and advocacy by the Saxon State Government during the VIII legislative term. It is structured around five fields of action:

1. **European policy priorities** – education, economic strength, security, energy, climate protection, social justice, cultural diversity, and the EU budget.
2. **European education** – promoting knowledge and identification with Europe.
3. **European public outreach** – communicating the benefits of European cooperation.
4. **European capability of the administration** – strengthening expertise and presence of Saxon civil servants in EU-related institutions.
5. **Wires for European policy advocacy** – enhancing Saxony's presence in Brussels, Berlin, and Dresden.

The aim is a **coherent, long-term European policy** that reinforces Saxony's strengths, safeguards its interests, and contributes to the EU's future viability.

## Action Area I – European Policy Focus Areas

### *Focus 1: Saxony as an Attractive, Innovative, and Resilient Centre for Education, Research, Science, and Industry within the EU*

Saxony views *education, science, research, and the economy as the foundation of prosperity, innovation, and social cohesion within the European context*. Education is understood as the key to democratic participation, social inclusion, and economic performance. The objective is to strengthen the European dimension in schools, vocational training, and higher education. Through programmes such as *Erasmus+*, more pupils, apprentices, students, and teachers are to gain international experience and build European networks. Partnerships with Poland, the Czech Republic, and other European neighbours support joint educational initiatives and personal exchange.

In *higher education policy*, Saxony is committed to reinforcing European university alliances, facilitating the exchange of students and researchers, and providing critical input to the development of new EU quality assurance and recognition procedures. Reducing bureaucracy and improving access to funding remain central concerns.

In the field of *research and innovation*, Saxony builds on its strong academic landscape and its active participation in *Horizon Europe*. Research is seen as a driving force for competitiveness, sustainable growth, and academic freedom. Saxony calls for adequate, excellence-oriented funding for future EU framework programmes, support along the entire innovation chain up to market readiness, and reduced administrative burdens. The Free State advocates openness in science and supports researchers from authoritarian states.

Economic development is to be secured through *innovation promotion, strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises, and a technology-neutral industrial policy*. Saxony relies on European frameworks that ease regulatory pressure on SMEs and foster growth. Expanding regional innovation ecosystems, improving technology transfer, and providing better financing opportunities for high-tech start-ups are among the key objectives.

**Microelectronics** is given special emphasis: with its cluster *Silicon Saxony*, the Free State of Saxony aims not only to remain Europe's leading location for large-scale semiconductor manufacturing, but also to further position itself as a key player in the entire value chain. Complementary initiatives focus on digitalisation, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, cybersecurity, and more resilient supply chains.

*Energy and climate policy* should reconcile supply security, sustainability, and competitiveness. Saxony supports diversification, the expansion of renewable energies, hydrogen technologies, and storage capacities. The Free State is also committed to climate-resilient agriculture, secure raw material supplies, and an innovation-friendly chemicals policy.

In terms of *fiscal policy*, Saxony stands for stability, sound public finances, and investing in a way that is consistent with intergenerational equity. It is committed to the Stability and Growth Pact, the principles of the social market economy, and the preservation of a robust institutional framework in the European banking sector.

## ***Focus 2: Saxony's Contribution to Security, Peace, and Crisis Resilience in Europe***

The Saxon State Government is firmly committed to ***strengthening the European security architecture*** and supports further ***steps towards the establishment of a European Defence Union***. Beyond military capabilities, investments in research, industry, and societal resilience are key. The State Government stands by the German Armed Forces (*Bundeswehr*) and supports its bases located within Saxony. The Free State is home to highly capable companies, research institutions, and start-ups active in key technologies such as microelectronics, robotics, communications, and cybersecurity — all of which make significant contributions to European security and defence initiatives. The overarching goal is to harness synergies between science, industry, and the defence sector while expanding international partnerships.

A particular focus lies on ***cybersecurity***. The Saxon State Government advocates a coordinated European cyber defence strategy, including the strengthening of EUROPOL and ENISA, the development of clear EU response mechanisms, and the creation of a European Cyber Corps. Saxony is applying to host a European cyber defence centre and promotes cyber skills as well as international cooperation in this field. The Saxon Cybersecurity Strategy, adopted in May 2025, reinforces the Free State's digital resilience.

The State Government stands in ***solidarity with Ukraine***, particularly through cooperation with the Kharkiv region in the areas of education, energy, culture, and public administration. It also supports the accession of Ukraine and of other candidate countries from the Western Balkans, Georgia, and Moldova to the European Union, on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria, with the aim of strengthening freedom, stability, and democracy across Europe.

In the field of ***asylum and migration***, the Saxon State Government supports the implementation of the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and the planned joint return mechanism. However, it calls for practical regulations that do not impose additional burdens on regional and local authorities. Border controls along Saxony's external borders should remain in place until EU measures of equivalent effectiveness are fully operational.

## ***Focus 3: Saxony as a European Model Region with a High Quality of Life – Driving Regional and Structural Transformation on the Path to Climate Neutrality in Europe by 2050***

Saxony plays a key role in Europe's ***structural transformation***. Within the framework of the Paris Climate Agreement and the EU's goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050, the Free State—being one of the regions most affected by the coal phase-out—serves as a pioneer of a just and sustainable industrial transition. As a founding member of the EU Coal Regions in Transition Platform and an active partner in the Just Transition Platform, Saxony is actively shaping the transition towards a climate-neutral and innovative economy. Its goal is to become a model region of industrial transformation – ecological, social, and technological.

With the planned ***Net Zero Valley Lusatia***, Saxony, together with Brandenburg, will assume a leading role in implementing the European Net Zero Industry Act. Lusatia aims to become the

first European Net Zero Valley—a centre for battery, storage, hydrogen, and energy efficiency technologies. Streamlined approval procedures and strategic investments will create a replicable European model for accelerated transformation and regional development.

This transformation is supported by an **active European industrial, structural, and social policy**. Saxony calls for an EU directive on a just transition, focusing on skills development, employee participation, and social security. The Just Transition Fund and flexible state aid frameworks are central instruments to secure long-term investments in decarbonisation and future technologies.

Another key priority is **cross-border cooperation with Poland and the Czech Republic**, firmly anchored in legal frameworks and strategically strengthened at the EU level. Programmes such as Interreg should be further simplified and financially reinforced to support joint innovation and regional development initiatives.

**Innovation-driven regional development** aims to create smart, resilient regions through close collaboration between business, science, and local authorities. Through initiatives such as the simul+ InnovationHub and its engagement in the European Committee of the Regions, Saxony supports the European vision of a networked research and innovation policy.

**Saxony's urban development and architectural culture** policies also serve as models for Europe. The Leipzig Charter and the New European Bauhaus shape EU-wide approaches to sustainable urban development. Saxony reinforces these concepts through sustainable building culture, international research, and local architectural initiatives.

In the field of **water and infrastructure policy**, Saxony advocates at the EU level for resilient water management, practical regulations for wastewater treatment, and long-term support for the transformation of water infrastructure in structurally changing regions.

With regard to **mobility and transport**, Saxony is committed to sustainable, safe, and cross-border mobility in line with the European Green Deal. Key projects include the new Dresden–Prague railway line, the expansion of public transport and cycling infrastructure, and the development of emission-free propulsion technologies.

Through these efforts, Saxony positions itself as a European model region that successfully combines **industrial transformation, climate protection, innovation, and social stability**.

#### **Focus 4: Saxony's Contribution to Social Justice, Cultural Diversity, and Shared European Values**

The Saxon State Government is committed to the objectives of the **European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)** and supports a European Union that promotes fair working conditions, employee participation, strong collective bargaining partnerships, and social justice. Its overarching aim is to reduce social disparities and combat poverty. Since 2017, the EPSR has served as the central framework for a more social Europe, focused on equal opportunities, access to the labour market, and sustainable social protection. Saxony actively contributes to EU employment and labour market policies and seeks early involvement in the development and implementation of the second EPSR Action Plan, which is to define new “Future Standards of Work” by 2029.

In the areas of **participation, democracy, equality, and social cohesion**, the State Government promotes citizen participation at the municipal level, particularly among children and young people, through digital platforms. It advocates for gender equality, diversity, and anti-discrimination, strengthens the State Action Plan for the Acceptance of Diverse Lifestyles, and supports civil society engagement as a means of fostering democratic participation and reinforcing Europe's shared values. Culture is understood as a vital anchor of social integration.

The **rule of law** forms a cornerstone of Saxony's understanding of European identity. Through the Leipzig Rule of Law Conference, the Free State has established a forum for European exchange on the rule of law, fundamental rights, and democracy. Saxony is expanding victim protection under the Istanbul Convention, improving access to justice through advisory services and legal aid, and advancing the digital transformation of the judiciary in line with the EU e-Justice Strategy.

**Culture** is regarded as both a carrier of European identity and a bridge for mutual understanding. Saxony nurtures one of Europe's richest cultural landscapes and promotes intercultural exchange, festivals, and partnerships. The **European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025** embodies living European values and sustainable cultural networks. The **protection and promotion of Sorbian language and culture** remain a central concern and continue to be pursued actively within the framework of European minority protection.

### ***Focus 5: Saxony's Contribution to Reducing Bureaucracy, Simplifying Processes, and Advancing Digital Administration in Europe***

The Saxon State Government is committed to a Europe that keeps regulation **simple, efficient, and citizen-oriented** — one that fosters trust and leaves responsibility where solutions are most effective. The goal is a practical, resource-efficient, and transparent legislation that upholds the principle of subsidiarity and empowers regional decision-making.

Saxony actively advocates for **simplified procedures to strengthen the EU's competitiveness and reduce bureaucratic burdens on public administration, business, and society**. The Free State welcomes European Commission initiatives such as the Omnibus Initiative and revisions to the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and Sustainability Reporting standards. At the same time, Saxony calls for further relief, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and aims to reduce reporting obligations and administrative costs across the board.

Saxony's commitment to the 'anti-gold-plating' principle within its executive capacities ensures that EU requirements are implemented without unnecessary national additions, thereby avoiding duplicative regulations.

. EU legislation must be practical and proportionate; therefore, Saxony advocates for greater involvement of administrations, businesses, and civil society in the legislative process, as well as for expanding the mandate of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board to include early-stage impact assessments.



The **principle of subsidiarity** remains a guiding tenet: decisions should be taken at the lowest effective level, and EU regulation should be limited to cases where there is clear European added value.

In the field of **environmental and nature protection**, Saxony supports the objectives of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation but calls for pragmatic, low-bureaucracy implementation. Species and ecosystem protection should be pursued in cooperation with local communities. The Free State advocates for **regional population management of protected species** such as wolves and beavers, and for clear state responsibilities in this regard.

The **digital transformation of public administration** is seen as a key European future project. Saxony seeks to play an active role in shaping EU digital frameworks, to leverage EU funding programmes strategically, and to enhance the digital competence of its administration. Through networking, innovation, and cross-border cooperation, Saxony aspires to act as a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe and to contribute to the development of shared European standards for digital governance.

### ***Focus 6: Continuing Saxony's Positive Development with Ongoing EU Support and Ensuring Adequate Representation in the Post-2028 EU Budget***

Saxony leverages EU funding from ERDF, ESF+, JTF, EAFRD, EMFAF, and EMFF to strengthen its competitiveness, sustainability, and quality of life. The **successful implementation of the 2021–2027 funding period** and the **optimal utilization of available resources remain top priorities**, despite a challenging budgetary environment.

The European Commission's proposals of 16 July 2025 for the 2028–2034 MFF reform envisage a shift toward a policy-driven, more centralized budget. While supporting modernization, the State Government clearly emphasizes that **reforms must remain implementable on federal level, reflect regional specificities, and preserve the principle of shared management**. It advocates for continued direct EU funding to the regions to ensure maximum financial autonomy, simplification, and reduction of bureaucracy.

Saxony calls for **well-resourced funds, higher EU co-financing rates, and fewer reporting obligations**. The government reaffirms the **importance of a strong cohesion policy** to promote equivalent living conditions and to manage structural change effectively. ERDF, ESF+, and JTF should remain independent funding instruments, with ERDF and ESF+ supporting research, employment, and social integration, and JTF objectives maintained. New security and defense-related tasks must not come at the expense of cohesion or agricultural policy.

Saxony supports robust **European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg)** to advance cross-border projects and regional networking, as well as the continuation of the LEADER programme for rural development. CAP and CFP should also continue with adequate budgets and high co-financing rates, safeguarding agriculture, rural areas, and aquaculture.

Furthermore, Saxony calls for the continuation of "Creative Europe", targeted EU funding for tourism, research, and innovation, and a **fair own-resources system** that respects national tax sovereignty without placing additional burdens on businesses.

## Action Area II – European Education

### *Learning, Experiencing, Shaping Europe – European Education in Saxony as a Contribution to Promoting Democracy and Strengthening Social Cohesion*

For Saxony, Europe is a lived reality, a community of values, and a forward-looking perspective. The goal of the Saxon State Government is to strengthen democratic awareness, civic participation, and European identity in a sustainable way through **comprehensive European education**. To this end, educational offerings in schools, universities, vocational training, as well as in non-formal and informal learning contexts, are being systematically expanded and institutionalized. The foundation for this is the comprehensive **European Education Concept**, which emphasizes lifelong learning, participation, and practical formats such as competitions, simulations, study trips, and citizen dialogues.

A particular focus is placed on **school-based European education**. It is an overarching teaching principle across all school types and embedded in curricula. Civic education and European education are closely intertwined, for example through the **EU Project Day**, which facilitates direct exchanges between students and representatives from politics and administration. Programs such as Erasmus+, eTwinning, and school partnerships promote hands-on experiences of Europe. The State Government supports teacher training, in cooperation with partners such as the Saxon State Agency for Civic Education (SLpB), and develops new formats such as the **“eHike through Brussels”**. Networks like the **Erasmus+ consortium** and dedicated school budgets further support European projects in schools.

Beyond schools, the overall concept focuses on **non-formal educational formats** in four areas: language, encounter and mobility, skills, and networking. The aim is to make Europe tangible in everyday life—through language courses, exchange programs, or adult education classes. A new funding guideline, **International & Europe (from 2026)**, will strengthen civic engagement.

The **Saxon State Agency for Civic Education (SLpB)** plays a central role in European political education. It imparts knowledge about the EU, its institutions, and Saxony's neighbors Poland and the Czech Republic, promotes European debates, and supports multipliers. Together with the State Chancellery, it coordinates European education initiatives, networks stakeholders, and establishes methodological standards.

To foster exchange, annual **European network meetings for European actors in Saxony and a trilateral conference with Poland and the Czech Republic** are held. These events support project development, cooperation, and the strengthening of social cohesion in the border region. The development of the **SLpB project office in Chemnitz** into a permanent European learning and encounter center is also under consideration.

Collaboration with **Europe Directs in Saxony** is being institutionalized. They inform citizens, promote dialogue about the EU, and organize diverse formats. Additionally, **idea, writing, and art competitions**, as well as the **successful European Parliament Simulation (SimEP)**, are being continued and expanded to include students and working professionals.



## Action Area III – European Public Engagement

### *Encountering, Understanding, and Shaping Europe in Saxony*

Action Area III focuses on making Europe visible in the *daily lives of Saxony's citizens and fostering dialogue about European values, opportunities, and initiatives*. The goal is to actively engage citizens, strengthen awareness of the EU, and enhance Saxony's profile as a connected and innovative region. This also includes strategic support for Saxony's bids for international recognition, such as *UNESCO World Heritage sites, European Green Capital, or European Youth Capital*.

A key priority is the *communication of European Structural Funds and LEADER cooperation*. Public outreach promotes transparency, acceptance, and the visibility of EU investments. The State Government employs guides, the website "europa-fördert-sachsen.de", press work, social media, and events to make EU projects visible. The active involvement of beneficiaries is particularly emphasized, demonstrating the European added value locally and reinforcing the legitimacy of funding.

*Collaboration with EU representations in Germany*, European institutions such as the Council of Europe or the ECPMF, as well as civil society actors like the European Movement Saxony, Europa-Union Saxony, and JEF Saxony, is central. This cooperation promotes professional exchange, the creation of Europe-focused networks, and the integration of European topics into public debate. *Formats such as encounter and dialogue events, European festivals, simulations, and workshops are particularly established in rural areas*.

Regular highlights include the *Fête de l'Europe* in Dresden, Chemnitz, and Leipzig, the *European Youth Exchange in the Ventotene Forum and Weimar Triangle*, and participation in events such as *"Tag der Sachsen"* and the *Open Government Quarter*. These initiatives provide direct engagement with diverse audiences and promote European participation.

Innovative formats like the *Europe Bus* and *PopUp Europe* bring EU topics to smaller municipalities, medium-sized towns, and rural regions, enabling interaction and making funding projects tangible. Private donors and local partners are intended to ensure the sustainability of these offerings.

The *European Days of Arts and Crafts (ETAK)* link economy, culture, and education, highlighting the European dimensions of artisanal traditions while fostering exchange, awareness of shared roots, and European identity. The State Government provides ongoing support for ETAK.

Overall, European public engagement in Saxony relies on *diverse, accessible, interactive, and visible formats* to make the European idea tangible, foster dialogue, and raise citizens' awareness of the opportunities and values Europe offers.

## Action Area IV – European Competence of the Administration

For the Free State of Saxony to successfully represent its interests in the EU and efficiently implement European regulations, an efficient and Europe-competent administration is crucial. The aim is to **systematically develop employees' professional and operational competencies** through targeted training, personnel development, and organizational structures.

The **Europe Qualification Program** consolidates existing seminar offerings at the University of Applied Sciences Meißen (FH) and the Training Center (FoBiZ) into five pillars. At its core is the **Europe Excellence Program**, which covers the **EU curriculum and a fast-track training course** for civil servants in career group 2. The program concludes with a field trip to Brussels, including a simulation exercise; successful participants receive a Europe Certificate and can voluntarily join the Europe Personnel Pool. Additional pillars include online formats, excursions to EU and federal representations, and open seminars at FoBiZ. The program emphasizes practical skills, language development, and alignment with current EU developments.

A **Europe Trainee Program for junior staff** (LG 2.1) is planned to provide initial international experience in Brussels, Wrocław, or Prague. The **Europe Personnel Pool** identifies Europe-qualified employees, networks them, and provides regular updates on practical assignments in EU institutions or international organizations.

A **central contact** within the Europe Department of the State Chancellery coordinates the personnel pool, connects Europe-qualified staff with relevant ministries, and strategically manages training and deployment opportunities.

The **Representation of the Free State of Saxony to the EU in Brussels** remains a central platform for internships, experience exchange, and hands-on engagement with European topics.

**European competence** is also embedded as **a career development component**: international assignments, language skills, and EU certificates are increasingly considered in personnel development plans.

Overall, these measures aim to equip civil servants to effectively perform EU-specific tasks, competently represent Saxony's interests in the EU, and **sustainably strengthen the European capability of the state administration**.

## Action Area V – Wires for Advancing European Policy Interests

### *For a Strong Saxony in a Future-Resilient European Union*

The Saxon State Government employs a wide range of political channels to represent Saxony's interests at the EU level, to shape European policy coordination between the federal and state governments, and to strengthen participation in alliances, networks, and platforms.

The ***Representation of the Free State of Saxony to the EU in Brussels*** is a central instrument of Saxony's European policy. It serves as a showcase for the state, an early warning system, a source of initiatives, and a strategic link between regional policy and EU institutions. Its ongoing development focuses on professionalizing the personnel structure, implementing internship programs and study visits, utilizing digital systems for information and documentation processes, and systematically integrating the office into the workflows of the State Chancellery (SK) and relevant ministries. A cross-departmental EU work program ensures coherent articulation of Saxony's interests and channels European policy insights back to Dresden, Berlin, Wrocław, and Prague.

Saxony is also actively engaged at the ***federal level***: in the Bundesrat (EU Committee), it evaluates European legislation and formulates recommendations. In the Conference of Minister-Presidents (MPK) and the Conference of European Affairs Ministers (EMK), Saxony coordinates cross-state European policy positions and presents its own proposals, including on EU enlargement, research, cross-border cooperation, and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Sector-specific ministerial conferences also provide platforms for advancing Europe-related priorities.

At the ***EU level***, Saxony is represented in the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), participates in specialist commissions, undertakes presidium responsibilities, and maintains cross-border relationships with regions in Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, Finland, and the Czech Republic. Collaboration with Saxon Members of the European Parliament is being intensified to influence EU initiatives at an early stage.

Saxony is actively involved in ***European networks***: it is a founding member of the Alliance of European Automotive Regions (ARA) and the European Semiconductor Regions Alliance (ESRA), and a member of the Intergroup Wine and Solar Industry Regions Europe (SIRE). Additionally, Saxony participates in the EU Coal Platform and the Just Transition Platform (JTP) to advance structural transformation and climate neutrality in the region.

Overall, Saxony positions itself as an ***active shaper of European policy***, strategically representing its interests at regional, national, and EU levels in a connected, effective, and impactful manner.