

Communal elections, June 11, 2023

déi Lénk Diddeleng electoral program

Dudelange is a beautiful city where life is generally good. déi Lénk Diddeleng do not pursue an opposition policy in which they speak out against everything. But that doesn't mean there's no room for improvement. In a city like Dudelange, there's always something to be done.

So, what do the déi Lénk stand for in Dudelange?

The core of our demands is the déi Lénk framework electoral program, which contains many principles and demands. You can read the program at <https://2023.dei-lenk.lu/>.

In this context, we would like to address 6 points in our local program that we would like to implement specifically in Dudelange. Our main themes are as follows:

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1. Housing

Are you shocked by the current price explosion in the housing market?

The price explosion is a national problem that hasn't been properly addressed for years. As déi Lénk, we have made a series of proposals on how to approach the housing crisis, but they have not been taken seriously by the big political parties. At national level, things have been lying dormant for too long, or rather, the wrong policy has been adopted. For example, green minister Kox's plan for a new rent law is a disaster, and risks pushing rents even higher in the years to come. You can read all our demands at national level to create more affordable housing on : <https://dei-lenk.lu/tag/logement>.

But the commune also has some levers at its disposal. Unfortunately, until a few years ago, the majority in Dudelange sold a lot of public land to private developers, thereby losing control over housing prices. That kind of approach is out of the question with us.

déi Lénk Diddeleng propose :

- **no more privatization of public land.**

On the contrary, the commune should buy as many plots of land and apartments/houses as possible, so that it can become a stakeholder itself and create affordable housing.

In the medium term, we want our municipality to have 10% public rental housing at an affordable price. This means that the municipality should itself offer +/- 200 rental units (if we take into consideration the population increase in NeiSchmelz and the 866 affordable rentals planned by the Housing Fund).

- **develop a local strategy.**

How much public housing do we need in Dudelange? How many are needed for students, for families with children, for the elderly? In Dudelange, there are no useful figures concerning these needs. Our commune needs a clear strategy on the projects it wishes to invest in over the coming years. In addition to the number and size of future affordable housing units, location, for example, also plays an important role in ensuring a decent social mix in our town quarters in the future.

- **adapting building regulations to future challenges.**

Dudelange needs more housing, but our space is also limited. Under no circumstances do we want to risk urban sprawl in Dudelange. So the first thing we have to do is fill the many empty lots. And that's why we also have to allow ourselves to build higher and denser in places, where the urban landscape so allows. Of course, this is not possible everywhere. For example, an opportunity was missed on NeiSchmelz, but it's not too late to adjust. Dense building is not automatically synonymous with ghetto living, but can also open up completely new opportunities and possibilities in a city like Dudelange.

Alternative housing concepts must also be made possible and accessible. These range from shared housing to tiny houses. The commune of Dudelange should in no way hinder these initiatives, but rather support them as best it can.

- **combat speculation.**

Speculation on vacant lots is a problem throughout the country. Some large landowners deliberately hold back their plots, creating a shortage and driving up prices even further. It's also a problem in Dudelange. That's why we're asking the commune of Dudelange not to wait for the government to finally act, but to act itself and levy a speculation tax on empty plots and houses. This tax should enable more housing to be created.

Individuals whose land or house is empty for a variety of reasons can be assisted in different ways to find the best solution. For example, an empty plot of land can be made available for a tiny house, creating a living space, at least for the short term, until the building site can be constructed. The commune can also help the owner find a tenant.

Only if the owner refuses all the possibilities offered would a tax be levied and increased each year, so that this money can then be used to continue creating public housing.

Every owner can and must, with the help of the commune, be part of the solution, not part of the problem, of the housing crisis.

2. Mobility

Do you think it's a shame that the city center is drowning in traffic?

Dudelange is drowning in traffic. According to a Biergerpanel survey, 90% of people who travel by car in Dudelange are ready to change their behavior. 3/4 of residents would also like to see a "quarter of tomorrow" in which the car is not the priority, where distances are short and where there is space for people to meet and live together.

déi Lénk Diddeleng wish for:

- **a pedestrian zone instead of a shared space.**

Compared with many other cities, Dudelange has a beautiful center for shopping and having a drink. But this public space could be even more pleasant if it weren't constantly criss-crossed by cars looking for a free parking space. The parking garage "am Duerf" is never fully occupied, despite its perfect location and the fact that you don't have to drive through the center to get there. As déi Lénk, we are therefore committed to a pedestrian zone. When the weather's fine, cafés and restaurants could take advantage of this and set up large terraces that would be well frequented.

Other businesses would also benefit if people could enjoy strolling through the center and children could play without having to watch out for traffic. Thanks to the extra space, the center could also be more verdant, which would attract more people.

- **promote soft mobility through coherent decisions.**

In a city like Dudelange, most journeys can be made on foot or by bike. To ensure that this is both safe and pleasant, however, consequences sometimes have to be considered. In some places, the car has to give way so that other forms of mobility can find their place. This sometimes means making courageous and consistent decisions.

- **making walking around Dudelange more pleasant.**

Walking remains the most important form of soft mobility. As Dudelange is relatively compact, it lends itself well to this. However, it's not always pleasant to walk around Dudelange when all you see are cars and concrete. We want to create a network of footpaths by planting more vegetation along the streets, which will help absorb noise and reduce heat in summer. In every city quarter, squares will be created so that people can meet easily and enjoy nature.

- **more and safer cycle paths.**

Dudelange lends itself well to many journeys on foot or by bike. Most journeys within Dudelange can easily be made without a car. But if we want more people to give up the car, we also need to create the right infrastructure. A safe cycle path is much more than just a line on the road, it must be structurally separated from cars to ensure real and perceived safety for cyclists. Children also need to be guaranteed safe passage from point A to point B on their bikes.

- **strengthening public transport.**

If we want to reduce traffic in Dudelange, we also need to strengthen the public transport offer. Especially for journeys outside Dudelange. Rail links should improve considerably in a few years' time, once the CFL works are completed. In the meantime, it's important to stay in close contact with CFL, keep up the pressure and make sure that Dudelange isn't forgotten and is well-informed of the latest developments. Contact with CFL is also important in order to be able to expand the Carsharing Service Flex offer as needed.

But with rail connections as they are at the moment, we need alternatives. That's why we want to expand and improve bus connections to Bettembourg and Luxembourg-Kirchberg in particular, so that more people can use and rely on public transport. We also need to analyze whether a bus link to the southern part of the capital, the Bouillon P&R, would make sense, as this is where we can get a bus link to virtually every district in the capital.

3. Water prices

Do you also think municipal taxes are unfair?

The commune collects a series of taxes that are used to fund public services. déi Lénk support solid communal services that everyone deserves. At the same time, the commune also has a social responsibility to ensure that none of its citizens is left behind.

déi Lénk Diddeleng demand:

- **no further privatization of municipal services (after gas prices have already been privatized)**

- **staggered water prices.**

Since our foundation, we have been committed to staggered water prices. We believe that water is a human right, and that basic consumption should therefore be made available to everyone for free. At the same time, wastage must be punished. That's why our water price would consist of three stages: basic consumption would be free, those who consume a little more would pay the normal tariff, and those who consume a lot of water would pay a higher tariff. This staggered approach is both socially fair and environmentally friendly. We guarantee that no-one will have to give up something as vital as water for financial reasons, and at the same time encourage people not to waste water, to be careful about their consumption and to think about it.

- **fair and equitable taxes** (litter garbage containers, etc.).

We support the recently decided changes to the tax regulations, which stipulate that you only pay for what you use. In general, we want taxes in Dudelange to respect two principles: ecological, to encourage people not to waste, and social, so that citizens who have less should also pay less. We try to respect this principle for every tax levied by the commune.

4. Crèches and Maisons Relais

Are you having trouble balancing work and childcare?

More and more families need their children to be cared for in a crèche or maison relais for a certain period of the day. But the offer doesn't always meet the growing demand. Waiting lists at public crèches are long. The commune must ensure that every child in Dudelange can find a place in these structures.

déi Léink Diddeleng wish to:

- **create more public crèches.**

The commune of Dudelange recently built a new crèche in the Italy quarter, in addition to the two it already runs. Nevertheless, the number of public crèches is far from sufficient.

- **continue to improve the offer of Maisons Relais.**

The commune is not badly positioned in this area. But there is already a waiting list for the next school year every spring. We need to make a real effort to ensure that every child who needs a place gets one.

- **guarantee access to the music school and sports clubs.**

5. Climate

Are you concerned about the future and the consequences of the climate crisis?

The climate crisis is increasingly making itself felt and presents us all with major challenges. The government, but also the communes, must take their responsibilities in this context. Dudelange has already taken many good initiatives, but there is still room for improvement.

déi Lénk Diddeleng propose:

- **develop renewable energies.**
For every public building owned by the commune, check whether a photovoltaic installation makes sense. For newly-constructed buildings, it should be checked from the outset which energy sources can best be combined, and this should be included in the project planning from the outset.
The commune should also provide the best possible support for cooperatives active, for example, in renewable energy production.
- **Promote energy renovation.**
In the housing sector, a large proportion of energy is consumed because homes are not properly insulated. At national level, the system of financial aid for energy renovation needs to be reformed so that more people can access it. But communes can also play their part by running information campaigns and providing financial support for households wishing to renovate their homes.
- **create more green spaces** and, in general, design our roads in a climate-friendly way.
- **strengthen public transport and soft mobility.**

6. Participation, democracy and transparency

Do you feel you're not involved in the day-to-day decisions of the commune?

The commune is us, all the citizens. And we should all be involved in the commune's important decisions. But to make this a reality, we also need to ensure that everyone is as well-informed as possible about what's at stake.

It's never a good idea for decisions to be made by one person alone. Here in Dudelange, one party has had an absolute majority for over 75 years. That doesn't automatically mean that this party does everything wrong. But it does mean that the necessary transparency is often lacking, because this party does not have to consult with any other political faction, and can take decisions and impose them on its own. This also gives rise to rumors. Is it true that you need a membership card of the right party to get a job with the commune? Officially no, but

one party alone decides who is hired. The creation of an independent recruitment board, on which other parties would also be represented, would avoid such problems.

déi Lénk Diddeleng wish to:

- **livestream council meetings, with simultaneous translation into French.**
- **make the commune's website accessible** (easy language, reading aloud, etc.).
- **announce communal council meeting agendas on the commune's app and website, and also publish important documents.**
- **create a recruitment board.**
- **strengthen the communal advisory commissions, which must give their opinion on all important decisions.**

These commissions are made up of representatives of political parties and citizens, and must advise the college of deputy mayors. Too often, however, these commissions are not really taken seriously. We want the composition of these commissions to be adapted so that more citizens have the opportunity to participate.

Before any important decision is taken, the relevant commission must meet and submit a report to the municipal council. If the college of deputy mayors does not comply with the commission's opinion, it must provide an explanation of the reasons for this refusal.

Finally, committee meetings must also be held at times that allow all members to attend.

**déi Lénk Diddeleng
May 2023**