

# Germany: Greens and Left Party support massive social cutbacks in Saxony

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One and a half years after the sudden collapse of the Carola Bridge in Dresden, it is becoming clear how the current austerity budget of the Saxony state government is also bringing social bridges crashing down, particularly in the areas of culture, education and social affairs, strengthening the fascists.

Shortly before the turn of the year, the state government also made clear that following the 2025/26 austerity budget, it considers there is no alternative to further billions in savings in the 2027/28 biennial budget.

The minority government of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD), led by Minister President Michael Kretschmer, was elected to office in December 2024 with the votes of the anti-migrant Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) and the Left Party, from which it is a split-off. From the very beginning, Kretschmer declared that his government would rely on consultations with all parties, including the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). After six months and lengthy negotiations, the budget plan through 2026 was passed in the summer of 2025 with the votes of the Greens and the Left Party.

A budget gap of around €4 billion was plugged primarily through the depletion of remaining reserves and drastic cuts in all areas not classified as mandatory statutory expenditure. Since the largest item in this category is personnel costs, around 400 posts are to be cut by not filling vacancies left by retirements. Budgets in “voluntary services” fell by around €470 million in 2025 and by €499 million in 2026.

“With this biennial budget, the state government is embarking on a path of personnel reduction that we must necessarily continue to follow in the coming years. Otherwise, personnel expenditure will grow over our heads,” stated Finance Minister Christian Piwarz.

Exempted from this is the police force, which is to be increased by 500 posts. This is even more duplicitous as the cuts exacerbate precisely those social conflicts that are then used as justification for the expansion of the police state.

In an open letter, welfare associations warned that 5,000 to

10,000 jobs and numerous services such as debt counselling, addiction support, migration counselling and integration projects are at risk of collapsing. Without secured financing, painstakingly built structures would be permanently destroyed.

The immediate consequences: staff reductions, the elimination of local contact points, and the cessation of language courses, school projects and counselling centres. In rural regions, where such associations are often the only reliable partners, this leads to growing social isolation, intensified conflicts and a higher potential for escalation. This, in turn, is grist for the mill of right-wing extremist agitators.

Formally, the state is committed to language promotion and counselling structures in the Saxony Integration and Participation Act; in practice, however, these areas are being systematically hollowed out. Civil society networks such as the Saxony Refugee Council and “Tolerant Saxony” warn of a statewide “dying off of projects,” which is taking place precisely at a time of increasing right-wing extremist danger.

In the area of equality and anti-discrimination, funds are dropping from €5.9 million to €3.5 million. For “Integrative Measures,” funds are sinking from €14.9 million to just €2.9 million. Subsidies for health promotion and prevention are being reduced from €2.9 million to €1.2 million.

On top of this, social initiatives and associations complained at the end of the year that the Saxony Development Bank actually has fewer funds available than were planned in the budget. As a consequence, only 21 of 91 applications for 2026 were approved. Many established providers are thereby losing their funding basis and face closure.

Cultural institutions, for example in the state capital Dresden, are also expected to face cutbacks of €4.76 million, with €400,000 cut from libraries alone. While Dresden is merging theatres and the State Operetta into a “State Stages” municipal enterprise, for the purpose of savings; institutions in smaller cities like Görlitz and Zwickau are threatened with complete closure.

Iris Edenheiser, director of the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden, made clear to broadcaster MDR that fewer subsidies also mean reduced contribution for third-party funding, upon which they are significantly dependent. The consequence is that the loss of €665,000 is effectively doubled.

“€1.33 million less—we really can’t just shrug that off anymore,” the director told *Artour* magazine, describing it as a vicious circle. Less money means fewer special exhibitions, therefore less audience and attention, and ultimately less funding.

At the same time, the municipalities face a deficit of €1 billion, with half being in the red, the Saxony Association of Towns and Municipalities reported last week. This year, Dresden intends to offset a deficit of €144 million through cuts, Leipzig faces a deficit of around €100 million, and Chemnitz €113 million.

Nationwide, the municipal deficit rose from €6.3 billion in 2023 to €25 billion in 2024. This year, it is expected to amount to around €30 billion. This leads to a double burden: cuts at state level coincide with municipal austerity measures, leading to parallel cutbacks in identical fields.

In Saxony, the land of collapsing bridges, local and state politicians declare that “the poor financial situation impacts directly on investments in municipal infrastructure” and that finances “are definitely not sufficient to maintain or improve the condition of our roads.”

The Greens and the Left Party cynically justified their support for the state budget by claiming they had prevented worse. Both parties support the war policy of the federal government, which has been a major factor in rising costs while federal subsidies were cut to finance rearmament.

When the Greens were in government at federal and state levels, they implemented the austerity budgets themselves. Now, with Sebastian Scheel (SPD), a former Left Party member is even serving as state secretary in the Saxon Ministry of Economics. Scheel, who had previously made a name for himself with the austerity budget imposed by the Berlin Senate (state executive), quit the Left Party in 2024 because its support for the pro-war policy did not go far enough for him.

However, as is so often the case, the Left Party plays a particularly foul role outside parliament. While occasionally feigning criticism of the cuts and pro-war policies, to provide itself with an alibi, it says that approving the austerity budget is an “anti-fascist” act, claiming otherwise the Alternative for Germany (AfD) would be strengthened. Yet it takes meticulous care to isolate from one another all movements expressing opposition, waiting for them to run out of steam. If it organises small protests against cuts in the state and municipalities, or against the AfD, it avoids any

reference to the pro-war policies that it supports itself.

It is impossible to win even the smallest social improvements without connecting them to the fight against rearmament and war. These, in turn, are inseparably linked to the trade war measures and mass layoffs that are also hitting Saxony hard. In addition to the loss of thousands of jobs related to the Volkswagen plant near Zwickau, thousands more job cuts will be added in the coming years at Thyssenkrupp Automotive, Dow in Böhlen and Bosch in Sebnitz. In October 2025, the unemployment rate already stood at 6.8 percent, the highest level in October in 10 years.

The “lesser evil” policy of the Left Party and the Greens also tramples underfoot a central lesson of German history. Just as liberals and Social Democrats once supported Reich President Hindenburg to “block Hitler” coming to power—only then for Hindenburg to appoint Hitler as Reich chancellor—they now support right-wing CDU politicians like Merz and Kretschmer to “block the AfD.” Just as in the past, they are paving the way for the fascists, who profit from both the social devastation and rearmament.

In the new year, the Saxony state government has already announced a type of budget freeze. All “commitment appropriations” that lead to a financial pre-commitment of expenditures from 2027 onwards are temporarily restricted. Right-wing Finance Minister Christian Piwarz declared this to be unavoidable, as the next biennial budget for 2027/28 will also have a deficit amounting to approximately €2.9 billion.



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