



DOMOWINA



Program DOMOWINA – 2025

Connection – Openness – Responsibility





Preamble

The establishment of the Domowina 1912 as umbrella organization of Sorbian¹ associations was a crucial turning point in Sorbian history, because thereby the will to unite the forces in the Sorbian movement was clearly expressed and implemented for the first time. After the peaceful revolution 25 years ago the Domowina restructured itself to a politically independent umbrella organization of the Sorbs and the Sorbian associations and federations and for each individual Sorbian.

After the Domowina has celebrated its 100th foundation anniversary in 2012 - looking back on successes and defeats as well as mistakes in its work with the Sorbian people – it is time to redefine the position of the Domowina in the society of the 21th century and to develop visions for the future.

The following program aims to give impulses for a long-term work of the Domowina until 2025. Their most important task remains to contribute in their legally recognized function as representative of the interests of the Sorbian people to the preservation and development of the Sorbian. At the general meetings in particular, this program is to be further developed by analysing the state of progress achieved and underpinned by concrete measures to ensure that the present document is implemented.

Let's get started!

¹ The term „Sorbian“ is to be understood in the same way as the term “Sorbian/Wendish” which is commonly used in Brandenburg.



Assumption of action of the Domowina

Connection

In locations where the Sorbs² are based, the Domowina should work, both for the Sorbs and together with the Sorbs. Our history, culture, language, consciousness of the own particularity and finally the common efforts for the Sorbian – all of this connects us. The interregional and mutual support as well as the bilateral patriotic work under the umbrella of the Domowina are expression and duty of our solidarity. We promote the Sorbian regional characteristics and spread knowledge about it. Through the activities of the Domowina various partners within Lusatia and beyond are being united. In doing so, we support the targeted inclusion of Sorbian content in public life.

Openness

Domowina provides a community for all Sorbs and friends of the Sorbs, regardless of whether they live in or outside of Lusatia and would like to work in it as individuals or within a Domowina member association or regional federation. We continuously support the legally established principle of the free confession to the Sorbian, which gives access to the Sorbian life, possible for each interested person. We increasingly promote the learning and use of the Sorbian language. We encourage the diverse possibilities for the participation and strengthen thereby the common historical Sorbian consciousness. We act responsibly and transparently for the entire Lusatia and all Sorbs.

Responsibility

The Domowina supports the regional federations and member associations in their common work. Their members should consider themselves more strongly than before as members of the umbrella association and acknowledge their role. Everywhere where Sorbs are located, the Domowina should take responsibility and act in the sense of Sorbian interests. It should include the youth as her future into the Sorbian activities and create therefore appropriate forms of work for it. We ensure, every Domowina member is conscious about him or her representing the Sorbs by his personal working and acting. If we want a future for the Sorbian, each individual should commit himself after his or her possibilities for it. Particularly the members in electoral functions are called upon to appear actively and to work energetically for the Sorbian people.

² The term „Sorbs“ refers equally to both the designation „Sorbs/Wends“ according to Article 25 of the Constitution of the State of Brandenburg and the designation „Sorbs“ according to Article 6 of the Constitution of the Free State of Saxony.



I. Who and what we are

The Domowina is a union by Lusatian Sorbs, which consists of regional federations and associations. Friends of Sorbs can also be members. Its members as community of engaged Sorbs and Sorbian associations as well as the inclusion of allies in the Sorbian efforts form the basis for the entire work of the Domowina.

The protection, support and development of the Sorbian language, habitat, culture and identity of the Sorbs as well as the effort for more self-determination rights in Sorbian matters towards cultural autonomy are the main goals for our peaceful common work. The Domowina is a legally recognized representative of the Sorbian/Wendish people on the basis of the Sorbian/Wendish law of the Land Brandenburg and the Sorbian law of the Free State of Saxony.

Therefore, it is committed to its members and the entire Sorbian/Wendish people.

II. Our basis for actions

The Domowina is committed to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany and thus to the foundation of society in our country. The Sorbs are an independent people because of their history, language, culture and identity. They are equal citizens and an integral part of the population of our country and the German state. At the same time, as one people of Europe, they are committed to the principles of freedom and peace. From this self-understanding the Sorbian people is from our view an equal component of the European community of nations.

For the promotion of self-confidence as Sorbs and for the stimulation of the European thought the Domowina actively supports international contacts of the Sorbs, in particular to the Slavic neighbors as well as to other national minorities, ethnic groups and small people.

III. The membership and the Domowina

The active cooperation of the regional and national associations, the responsible participation of the individual members and the purposeful work of the organs of the umbrella association in the implementation of the statutes, program and resolutions of the Domowina general meetings form the basis of all activities in the umbrella association. In the formation of fundamental decisions our members should become involved.

Every person or association, who recognizes the Domowina statutes and the program and also actively puts effort into implementation, can become a member of the umbrella association. We promote and support the cooperation of the organs of the umbrella association with the regional federations organized in the Domowina and the associated (foreign) associations. It continuously carries out responsible work within international organizations such as FUEV, JEV and CIOFF.



IV. Spheres of activity of the Domowina

1. Domowina regional and national associations

The Domowina regional associations with their member groups and clubs and also the national professional associations with their sub-structures represent the associations under the umbrella of the Domowina and form the basis for the common work of the umbrella association. Together we should be even more active in recruiting new members, groups and associations to strengthen our membership.

The Domowina promotes their mutual cooperation of the regional and national associations and supports them in their projects. The new media and communication forms as well as new assembly forms of the Sorbs are indispensable tools for the further work of the Domowina.

2. Domowina – Representative of all generations of Sorbs

All generations are represented in the Domowina. The needs of the individual age groups are to be taken into account even better, in order to promote the generation-spreading interaction. The focus here is above all on families, young people and the next generation.

3. Sorbian language

The Sorbian language is apart from the free confession to the Sorbian the most substantial identification feature of the Sorbs. That is why we are strongly committed to the lively and self-evident presence of the Sorbian language in public life and to bilingualism or multilingualism in Lusatia. The protection, application and revitalization of the Upper and Lower Sorbian language and the efforts to preserve and revive the Sorbian local dialects, such as Schleifer Sorbian, are our most important common tasks. For this reason, the Domowina supports the development of language support measures and all language planning activities. It demands concrete actions of the federal, regional and local authorities to protect and promote the Sorbian language.

4. Sorbian-specific education and juniors' staff

The Sorbian-specific education serves to strengthen the identity of the individual and is an important task of the Domowina.

We commit ourselves to the fact that the Sorbian-language education in the kindergartens is ever more purposefully promoted and the bilingual instruction at the schools is secured.

The Sorbian history, culture and language should be further on conveyed with interdisciplinary measures and appropriate educational forms. Our regional federations and member associations should responsibly deal with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Especially in lower Lusatia it is intended to maintain the educational successes achieved so far in the field of language revitalization and to secure them by



creating new language areas. Also, the Sorbian teachers should be aware of their Sorbian and social task. The most important germ cells for the Sorbian-specific education are the families and all kinds of forms as well as a broad Sorbian community. Aiming, to embed a strong healthy Sorbian self-confidence, the Domowina merges together all members of the society and encourages them to work mutually.

5. Culture and art

The Sorbian cultural work and the promotion of art are important pillars of the preservation of the Sorbian identity. Therefore, we in the Domowina consider their promotion as important. We support our lay cultural groups through Sorbian cultural institutions. We promote the exchange and delegation of cultural groups, especially with Slavic countries and support the exchange with European minorities. For cultural tourism we demand the presentation of Sorbian content, firstly with bilingual signposting. Furthermore, we support gentle tourism, through which guests can authentically experience the Sorbian culture in Lusatia.

6. Economy

The economy is the spine of Lusatia and also it influences the situation in our homeland and the Sorbian people. By promoting our regional distinctiveness, we boost the appeal of our area for the economy. Especially the bilingualism and multilingualism are a locational feature and advantage for Lusatian companies. Therefore, we support all initiatives which encourage companies, traders and innkeepers to use the Sorbian language. We actively support cooperations between Lusatia and the border areas, such as Poland and Czech Republic.

The Sorbian languages and culture should be more intensively combined with regional, municipal and state planning. We watch out for obtaining the German Sorbian/Wendish character in this settlement area.

7. Political participation

The Domowina represents the interests of the Sorbian people on the basis of the regulations of the Sorbian/Wends law. It takes care of the extension of rights and duties of co-determination and self-determination, especially in Sorbian political, cultural and educational matters. We negotiate with all democratic political parties, members of parliament and committees at local, state, federal and European level. We guarantee the political articulation of the Sorbs in the interests of the enforcement of our rights and with this aim we delegate Sorbian representatives in the advisory and decision-making committees.

The councils, advisory boards and committees as well as the representatives for minority affairs or the interests of the Sorbs are important partners in the realization of Sorbian interests on all political levels.

With our political work we secure the preservation of the necessary financial basis for the Sorbian needs by a financing agreement between the Federal Government and the Lands Brandenburg and Saxony as well as further funds.



8. Relations with our neighbors in and outside of Lusatia

An important task of the Domowina is the further spreading of Sorbian knowledge in and outside of Lusatia, the support of local participants in the promotion of the Sorbian language and culture and their commitment to the Sorbian roots, in order to contribute to the equality of the Sorbs and the Sorbian language. The Germans are our neighbors, we maintain with them in peaceful coexistence in Lusatia, characterized by mutual solidarity.

But we also expect our ethical and cultural values to be respected and protected. The responsible authorities should react to humiliation and attacks in an appropriate and clear manner. We promote bilingualism and multilingualism and support all measures aimed at achieving this.

9. International relations

The Domowina maintains and promotes contact with other peoples. Cultural exchange, visits to our European neighbors as well as getting to know each other serve to strengthen the identity of the Sorbs. Above all, our Slavic brothers and sisters and the minorities abroad continue to be strong partners for us. We cultivate the existing and welcome new foreign contacts with the Domowina, especially on the level of our member associations.

10. Public engagement

With the help of the modern's medial possibilities we spread knowledge about Sorbian culture and language. The public is regularly informed about the work of the Domowina, especially its committees, through press releases, the magazine „Naša Domowina” and in other ways. For the cooperation in the Domowina we advertise actively; transparency is the best form of advertising. In addition, imparting knowledge about the situation and the challenges facing the Sorbian people is the task of every single one working in the Domowina. We pay attention to the equal consideration of the Upper and Lower Sorbian written language.

11. Sorbian institutions

The Domowina promotes the cooperation between the Sorbian institutions and other supporters of Sorbian interests. It motivates to use the services of the Sorbian institutions, to demand them and to influence the offers thereby actively. Joint projects and cooperation between the institutions contribute to a productive work for the Sorbs. At the same time, the Domowina calls upon all Sorbian institutions to make their services accessible to Sorbs outside of Lusatia.

12. Protection of the Sorbian settlement area



The legally determined municipalities, which belong to the Sorbian settlement area, are for the Domowina an important base for the definition of the obligations to promote the Sorbian language and culture. At the same time the Sorbian/Wendish settlement area of Brandenburg and Saxony is the main area of activity for the Domowina. Its protection is an essential task in the work of the Domowina. It uses all real possibilities to repel any further interference in the municipalities belonging to the Sorbian settlement area in connection with the raw material extraction, which is connected with resettlements or other losses for the Sorbian substance. The Domowina offers nevertheless its full support to the municipalities concerned by resettlements with the compensation of Sorbian substance loss.

It calls for a long-term and orderly phase-out of lignite mining and power generation, as well as a state support program for structural change in Lusatia.

13. The Sorbian religious heritage

The Domowina regards the rich heritage of religious Sorbian traditions and customs as an indispensable component of the Sorbian life also for the future generations. In the active care of these traditions and customs the Domowina sees an important cornerstone for the formation and stabilization of the Sorbian identity.

In the Sorbian catholic parishes, the church represents an important language area for all generations. The Domowina requests its regional federations and member associations to engage themselves also in the future for a various offer in the Sorbian religious life in their church communities.

In the protestant parishes of the Sorbian settlement area the religious events form important language areas for the Protestant Sorbs. In the work of the groups active in this area the Domowina sees an important contribution to the preservation of our mother tongue.

