

After almost four years of demonstrating and the city offering nice words and empty promises, NOTHING has happened. It’s unbelievable. For years, they have struggled implementing change in Heidelberg, so today, we’re here as the alliance “Heidelberg für Alle” (Heidelberg for Everyone), together with Migration Hub, the Seebrücke, Asylarbeitskreis, Solicamp and 15 more supporters.

All of us are a part of Heidelberg. We all bring in different experiences and perspectives. Only if all perspectives are heard, we can connect and combine progressive topics, and create a city for EVERYONE.

These are the demands the future mayor must realize:

Because of the election we asked ourselves: “After all this time, what will have to happen in Heidelberg after the election period is over?” and developed demands for the future mayor. Later, when we walk past city hall, we will stop and read them out loud. You can also find them on our website „Heidelberg fuer Alle”, in German and English. Please visit our website and sign the petition!

The coming years will show the way forward, especially regarding the climate crisis, and change is up to our mayor! Heidelberg must become carbon neutral until 2030 and hence fulfil its responsibility as a rich city in the global north. Climate justice must be the next mayor’s priority from day one!

We’re already experiencing the effects of climate change today, especially the Most Affected People and Areas, or MAPA for short. We already witnessed three „floods of the century“ in central Europe this century, including the flooding of the Ahr last summer. Catastrophes like that should happen once in 100 years. Forests are burning, Rivers running dry, other areas are flooded or devastated by storms. The people here in Germany, in the global north, have been destroying the environment and climate for centuries and ignorantly continue to do so by means of colonial continuities.

Internationally speaking, we are among the least affected by the consequences of the climate crisis we are causing. MAPA are the least responsible for fuelling the climate crisis but are suffering the most. Think about Pakistan, where one third of the country was flooded last August, or about the starvation crisis in eastern Africa, caused by drought.

Despite all of this, after four years of mass protests, the only thing we can do is watch as politicians of industrial nations are still failing to deal with the man-made climate catastrophe. They fail to minimize carbon emissions and they fail to support those affected by floods, droughts, forest fires, tornados, and so on.

The industrial nations must pay reparations to MAPA and provide funds for acute aid after natural catastrophes and for adapting to the effects of climate change. MAPA activists have been demanding this for years. This has also been demanded during the COP, the Conference of the Parties, which took place in Egypt until today.

Heidelberg, as a rich city in one of the richest countries with the highest emissions in the world, has an international responsibility. There’s a lot the city can do to fulfil this responsibility. At the very least, we must listen to MAPA and realize their demands.

Until 2050, more than 200 million people might be forced to leave their homes to escape the climate catastrophe. Despite that, the climate crisis is not an acceptable reason for seeking refuge, according to the Geneva Refugee Convention. Dear city of Heidelberg, dear next mayor, people who need to escape the effects of the climate crisis must still be welcomed in Heidelberg. Our city must become a safe haven for all refugees.

More than that, Heidelberg must – if possible in cooperation with other cities – facilitate a fund for providing aid and financial support to MAPA in adjusting to and dealing with climate change. This fund will be open for them during and after catastrophes caused by climate change.

MAPA representatives and activists in Heidelberg need to be given a stage and must be supported financially.

But it is not enough to support those affected. Effectively containing the climate catastrophe by lowering carbon emissions is just as important. Climate protection starts in our villages, towns and cities. Many things still need to change here, in Heidelberg. Existing plans to lower emissions finally need to be consistently implemented.

To make sure that Heidelberg will reach climate neutrality until 2030, a climate-neutral energy supply must be guaranteed. Heidelberg is far behind on this.

The development of renewable energies is still massively stalled. Some of the reasons given are downright laughable: Many of the proposed locations for wind turbines have been rejected because the turbines would have been visible from the castle. Oh wow, what a great reason to give in such a climate-friendly city! This year, the city has once again commenced the search for possible locations for wind turbines. We demand that, within the next two years, not just locations need to be found, but also investors, so that will be no more delays in construction.

We could produce about half of all energy consumed in Heidelberg using photovoltaic systems, whereas at the moment, we're only at 3.5%. This is not nearly enough!

We have become dependent on unpredictable autocrats for fossil fuels. Because of that, energy and heating costs are exploding. People don't know how to heat their homes. Climate-neutral energy and heat consumption are social issues!

Not only does the cost for heating need to go down (dear federal politicians, we need socially fair reliefs that deserve their name) but energy consumption must do the same. Instead of burdening those struggling to pay their bills, houses need to be energetically renovated. For Heidelberg, this means the redevelopment of 4% of all houses every year.

A big part of a building's emissions are created during construction. That's why we demand this: existing buildings before new ones! Especially when living space is scarce and prices are soaring, and many people are driven from the city centre, the distribution of living space is not just an issue of climate and resource protection, but also one of social equality. This needs to be considered whenever buildings are restored. It cannot happen that living space becomes an object of speculation and that only those with a higher income can afford life within the city – a close-knit circle of mostly white academics are the columns supporting this system of marginalization. But without craftsmen and -women, we would be lost, and this must be reflected in our societal conscience. We need an inclusive urban society, where workers, BIPOC and queer people are all welcome.

Another important aspect is climate-friendly mobility that includes all people and is not just concerned with car traffic! Reliable public transport must be developed so that all people can use it. Using public transport also cannot depend on money. The 3-euro-ticket is a good start but does not yet include everyone. The bike infrastructure also needs to improve!

We demand that the candidates and the future mayor realize all our demands, because the climate catastrophe is looming and the next eight years will be decisive.

If you can vote, please do! Use your vote in solidarity with all those who can't. For Children and youth under 16 years of age, those who aren't registered in Heidelberg, and those who suffer under municipal policies. We need all the votes we can get to prevent a continuation of what was. No matter who wins this vote, the next mayor must realize our demands!

But one simple cross next Sunday won't be enough. Our experience over the last few years has clearly shown that politicians will only act when the people pressure them into it. We must continue to be loud. We must show solidarity and join each other in our fight. We must prove over the next months and years that we will not accept any lazy compromise between climate and social justice. Any measures taken must enable social justice, because without that, climate justice will not be possible long-term.

We believe that Heidelberg can become a city of climate and social justice for all. That's why we fight together, in solidarity, with our alliance partners! And you can do something too, right now! Take out your phone, google “Heidelberg-fuer-Alle.de” and sign our demands! When more people support us, city hall won't be able to ignore our voices!

Thank you!