Election Program of the BürgerGemeinschaft Emmerich (BGE) 2025

"Emmerich. Make it safe!"

Emmerich needs a clear direction and decisive action — this is what the BürgerGemeinschaft Emmerich (BGE) stands for.

With our mayoral candidate Christopher Papendorf and a committed team, we are dedicated to creating a livable, future-proof, and fair city. At the top of BGE, we are politically experienced, well connected with other independent voter groups in Kreis Kleve and in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, and in constant exchange to bring ideas and experiences to benefit our city.

Our election program is based on the real challenges on the ground and offers concrete solutions — for all citizens of this city. We are not a party, but an independent voter group. For us, there is no party line — only the civic interest to further develop our city.

A central concern of BGE is safety, order, and cleanliness — in short: S.O.S. For over 20 years, we have been calling for improvements in this area, yet consistent implementation is still lacking. Emmerich must become clean, safe, and livable again — especially in hotspots and known fear zones. No more garbage and rats on the streets. To achieve this, we will strengthen the public order office — also through qualified career changers — and ensure a visible presence on streets and squares. Together with citizens, associations, and city administration, we will take responsibility and encourage active engagement for our city.

The lack of affordable and barrier-free housing affects more and more people in Emmerich. Housing must not be a luxury. In new construction projects, we enforce that at least 30% is publicly subsidized — to create socially mixed neighborhoods and real equal opportunities. We are shaping a fair, social, and forward-looking housing policy. Investors must not enrich themselves at the expense of our urban development or slow it down. We will give the negotiations with the owner of the Rheinparkcenter the necessary momentum to push for the reopening and sensible urban development of the complex.

Health is a fundamental right. We are further expanding medical care in Emmerich — especially in light of demographic change. We will reactivate an annual Health Day to make medical services more transparent. Additionally, we are developing urban planning concepts to make it easier for new general practitioners and specialists to set up practices. We fully support the planned inpatient hospice.

There is an urgent need for action in childcare, education, and sports. The waiting lists in daycare centers show that expansion has been massively neglected, pushing families to the limits of their capacity. We will accelerate daycare expansion and quickly build the new middle school building for the comprehensive school. The Willibrord Gymnasium will also receive the necessary support. We regularly review our sports facilities and modernize them as needed — in all districts and in all their aspects. We will specifically strengthen volunteering in this area.

Our local economy is the backbone of Emmerich. That’s why we actively support our industry, small and medium-sized enterprises, and start-ups. We create attractive soft location factors to attract skilled workers and ensure long-term settlement. We modernize Emmerich as a business location through targeted infrastructure measures, pragmatic reduction of bureaucracy, and clear contact points in the administration. We actively use the connection to the core hydrogen network for industry and climate protection. We also efficiently leverage our strategic infrastructural advantages — the port, highway, and rail connections. We will develop the border location with the Netherlands as a competitive advantage. To adequately honor our economy, we will introduce an annual entrepreneur award.

Another focus is on lived inclusion. Participation must be possible in all areas — regardless of age, disability, or social background. We actively take up ideas and feedback and expand support structures. The inclusion already practiced at schools such as Emmerich’s Gymnasium will be transferred to other educational institutions. We will expand the citizen bus to ensure that elderly or mobility-impaired people can access services and participate in community life.

Culture is often underestimated, yet it is crucial for quality of life. Culture connects people, creates identity, and enlivens our city. Emmerich has a broad cultural potential — from the Rhine Museum, PAN Art Forum, city theater, city library, Schlösschen Borghees, and Haus im Park to numerous associations, events, and creative initiatives. We will expand this potential. BGE will sustainably strengthen the cultural infrastructure and explicitly support low-threshold offerings and intergenerational projects. For us, culture is not a "luxury" but a natural part of urban development. Citizen festivals, exhibitions, music events, and cultural education are just as much a part of this as the targeted promotion of young artists and greater visibility for migrant and inclusive cultural work. A vibrant cultural life is an expression of our community.

For us, the future means sustainability and ecological responsibility. Protecting our natural resources is at the heart of our urban development. We will make Emmerich climate-resilient. We will create more urban green spaces, preserve and maintain trees, parks, and nature-oriented areas — also as protection against heat and heavy rain. We will further expand bike lanes, safe footpaths, and climate-friendly public transport. We will make consistent use of funding programs for renewable energy and building renovation. The municipal utility company will become a driver of the energy transition — for regional, affordable, and green energy supply.

Our administration already achieves a lot — sometimes too much because hesitation has prevailed over action. We will change this and significantly improve citizen services. Citizens, companies, and social or volunteer organizations will receive simple, accessible, and fast processing of their concerns. We will coordinate departments strategically and improve internal communication — wherever legally possible. In this way, we accelerate processes and simplify administrative procedures. Our goal is an efficient, digitally supported, and citizen-friendly service from a single source. Anyone submitting an application will in the future find central contact persons instead of endless responsibilities. We will create a modern administration — with clear structures, transparent communication, and a true service mindset. This will relieve both citizens and staff.

Finally, we stand for a democratic, diverse, and open urban society. Our hometown symbolizes a lived Europe and an open society. In times of social division and growing political extremes, we preserve and shape Emmerich as a democratic space. We live diversity, respect, and cohesion — regardless of origin, religion, or life plan. We actively support initiatives for integration, cultural exchange, and civic engagement. Just as democracy thrives on participation, our city thrives on volunteer work. We will replace the traditional New Year reception with a Volunteer Day to honor all volunteers and introduce a volunteer card.

In summary:

We do not need to reinvent Emmerich — but we will finally develop it decisively. We will fix existing deficits together — with courage, honesty, clarity, warmth, and a firm will to bring change.

For a clean, fair, healthy, and strong city. Join us in this change on September 14, 2025 — together for Emmerich.

Our goal: Emmerich. Make it safe!