



## **Tobias Hans, Saarland's Minister-President**

### **Personal History and Professional Career**

Tobias Hans was born on 1 February 1978 in the Town of Neunkirchen, Saarland, Germany. Following his primary school time at the Maximilian Kolbe Primary School in Wiebelskirchen, Tobias Hans changes over to the Christian von Mannlich High School in Homburg, where he passes his A-Level exams in 1997.

Subsequently, he begins his alternative civilian service at the Münchwies Psychosomatic Specialist Clinic and continues working there as a student research assistant after enrolling at the Saarland University in the fields of Information Science, Business Informatics and English Studies. During his studies, he also works as a research assistant with the CDU Parliamentary Group in the Landtag of Saarland in 2016. When he starts work as a personal representative of the minister Josef Hecken at the Ministry for Justice, Work, Health and Social Affairs in 2007, he no longer actively pursues his studies and ends up not completing them. Up until 2009, he works as a personal representative of another minister, Dr. Vigener, at the Ministry for Justice, Work, Health and Social Affairs.

In 2009, Tobias Hans is elected member of the Landtag of Saarland. From 2012 on, he acts as the parliamentary secretary of the CDU Parliamentary Group in the Landtag before becoming its chairman in 2015.

On 1 March 2018, the Landtag of Saarland elects Tobias Hans as the state's Minister-President. He is married and has two children.

### **Stages of Political Activity**

Tobias Hans becomes interested in politics at an early age and helps out on a voluntary basis in the youth organisation Junge Union Saar, as well as the CDU Saar. In 1997, he becomes the chairman of the local JU branch in his native town of Münchwies. He remains in this role until 2005. From 1999 to 2010, Tobias Hans acts as the JU chairman for the Town of Neunkirchen and its surroundings. In 2001, he also becomes the deputy chairman for the Neunkirchen CDU branch, and in 2004, he becomes member of the Neunkirchen town council, where he performs the duties of the deputy chairman of the Parliamentary Group until 2018.

From 2007 to 2011, Tobias Hans performs the duties of the CDU deputy chairman for Neunkirchen, after then, from 2012 on, those of the chairman (until 2018). From 2014 to 2018, he has been a member of the Federal Committee for Healthcare. On 19 October 2018, Tobias Hans was elected state president of CDU Saar.

## **Volunteering**

Tobias Hans feels deeply attached to his native town Münchwies and his home district Neunkirchen and its associations. For many years, he has been active in societies such as Obst- und Gartenbauverein Münchwies e.V. (Fruit and Horticulture Association of Münchwies) and the football association SVGG Hangard 1947 e.V.

Due to his special transatlantic ties, Tobias Hans has been active in the Partnerschaft der Parlamente (PdP - Partnership of Parliaments), the German-American Association of members of state parliaments, after becoming member of the Landtag of Saarland. He fosters exchange among colleagues of the state legislatures of the American federal states and the Canadian provinces. Up until this day, he is a board member of the Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut Saarbrücken e.V. (German-American Institute Saarbrücken), a binational organisation promoting the German-American relationships.

Tobias Hans feels a deeply rooted connection to the Christian values and the Christian idea of man. Since 2012, he is the chairman of the supervisory board of Caritas Trägergesellschaft Saarbrücken mbH (cts), a major religious institution that includes 34 organisations in Saarland and the neighbouring regions and helps people in various circumstances. He retains this role until he is elected Minister-President.

## **Making Use of the Digital Age**

It is already during his communal and parliamentary work that Tobias Hans is interested in the increasing digitalisation of almost all areas of life. He is passionate about using the existing potentials, about making them available to people, but also identifying the challenges.

It is also in his role as Minister-President that Tobias Hans likes to stress the importance of the digitalisation for the country's future. A high-performance digital infrastructure is the main requirement for taking advantage of such potentials as digital communication with authorities, telemedicine and (company) establishments. Saarland was the first German non-city state to succeed in ensuring an almost complete coverage with bandwidths of at least 50 Mbit/s.

Tobias Hans believes that the existing risks in connection with digitalisation can also be seen as an opportunity for Saarland to continue establishing itself as an internationally recognised location in the field of data and cyber security thanks to its outstanding research landscape. Based on the work of the Digitalisation Council appointed by the state government in 2016, Minister-President Hans initiated the development of Saarland's digitalisation strategy.

## **Strong finance and capable communities**

Tobias Hans is convinced: It is especially in the globalised and digitalised age that home and social cohesion are crucial. To achieve this, equal living conditions and strong, capable communities are imperative and have been consequently one of the Minister-President's top priorities since he took office.

In his government declaration from 14 November 2018, Minister-President Hans announced a consolidation of the municipal budgets by means of debt relief, aided by a regulated reduction of the accumulated municipal loans: Thanks to the “Saarland Covenant”, the state will take over almost a half (i.e. a billion) of old municipal debts, thus securing the towns’ and communities’ ability to act and invest. This model has never been practised before in this form, so this is a first for the entire country. It will relieve the communities’ finances and have a leverage effect in multiple ways. Furthermore, by 2022, Tobias Hans’ government will halve the nursery fees paid by parents thanks to the “Saarland Covenant”.

After Saarland had been suffering from an acute budget crisis, the 2019/2020 double budget will now again provide for a net debt repayment, which will also be accompanied by an investment campaign. This was preceded by a painful, but successful consolidation course and a continuous reorganisation of the financial relationships between the country and the states. The investment campaign’s main focal points are science & research, education, digitalisation and economic infrastructure.

### **France Strategy**

For Tobias Hans, cross-border collaboration and international focus are central areas of activity for any modern country. The France strategy has been dealing with these fields for years. Tobias Hans believes that this should remain one of the focal points of government’s work. Apart from the language-related and cultural aspect, he would like to emphasise the economic value added, which an in-depth cooperation holds in store. Some of the focal points are the cross-border labour and education market, corporate policies and research.