Volt's Internal Accessibility Policy

Social inclusion is fundamental. Consequently, Volt Europa and its member associations have a duty to ensure accessibility of their working procedures, interfaces and publications. Being **inclusive** is a crucial aspect of leading by example, and as such ensuring **accessibility** within the movement is central to guarantee diversity in membership, including of persons with disabilities.[1] Implementing accessibility also increases the user-friendliness of Volt's activities for all persons, irrespective of disability.

I. Digital Tools

A. Vision

Volt Europa and its member associations need to ensure that their digital tools are accessible to persons with disabilities, to enable everyone to contribute in a meaningful manner.

B. In Practice

Facebook Workplace and G Suite (Google Drive, Google Mail, Google Calendar) provide sufficiently accessible tools. Google Hangout is on principle not accessible for persons with hearing impairment. The following steps, when taken, ensure that Volt's digital tools can be easily used by all:

➢ Label/name shared documents in a consistent and intuitive way.
➢ When creating documents in Google Drive, use the pre-formatted styles in the top bar, especially for headings and lists (an example of this is this document). Do not manually design text levels.
➢ When sharing static visual material (photos, graphics, statistics, etc.), add alternative text.[2]
➢ When conducting surveys or collecting data, use Surveymonkey or Google Forms, which provide sufficient accessibility to persons with visual impairment.

---

[1] For the moment, the Accessibility Policy focuses primarily on persons with sensory disabilities (blind, partially sighted, deaf and hard-of-hearing). Where adequate, it also comments on persons with physical disabilities. Persons with cognitive and neurological disabilities are not yet covered in this document.

[2] For implementation in Google Drive, refer to Michigan State University, Creating Accessible Google Drive Documents, available at https://www.webaccess.msu.edu/Tutorials/google-drive.html. For implementation in Workplace, refer to Facebook Help Center, How do I edit the alternative text for a photo?, available at https://www.facebook.com/help/www/214124458607871

- ➢ Explore possibilities for sign language interpreters in Google Hangout conversations on a needs-basis.
- ➢ For further information on print design, refer to the dedicated section under [Print Communication](#)

II. Events

A. Vision

Volt Europa and its member associations regularly conduct local events, as well as European ones. It is key to Volt's principles, vision and values that those events be accessible to all.

B. In Practice

1. Local Events

Accessibility of each local event is dependent on small pre-planning steps. The following are a non-exhaustive list of what can be done:

- ➢ Attempt to hold local events in accessible locations, including with a dignified wheelchair access (e.g. not through the kitchen) and accessible washrooms.
- ➢ Openly communicate the accessibility of the location (or the lack thereof) beforehand in the announcement.
- ➢ Further ask for accessibility needs (e.g.: sign language interpreter, audio-loops, open spaces, etc.) in the invitation to be aware of potential needs.
- ➢ When giving presentations, refer to the dedicated section [under Digital Communication](#).
- ➢ When handing out print documents, provide digital formats to persons with visual impairment before, if possible.

2. Large Events

While full-accessibility to participants with disabilities is hard to achieve under budgetary constraints, all efforts should be taken to maximise accessibility. The earlier this is integrated into the planning processes, the better it can be implemented:

- ➢ Plan accessibility of an event from the beginning.[3]
- ➢ Ensure that the venue allows, at the very least, for dignified access, accessible washrooms, moveable furniture and non-static microphones.
- ➢ Ask for accessibility requirements during registration to be aware of potential needs.
- ➢ Designate a contact person for disability-related requirements and inquiries. Have contact person on standby for requests as 'helper'.
- ➢ If needed, attempt to provide audio induction loops and simultaneous sign language translation. Remember that translation across European languages is difficult. Seat the interpreters in a well-illuminated section in front of the first row.
- ➢ When integrating online voting in an event, ensure beforehand that the software or application used is accessible for persons with visual impairment. This is for instance the case with adoodle and Doodle.
- ➢ When live-streaming events on Facebook, attempt to integrate simultaneous sign language translation or speech-to-text captioning into the video feed.
- ➢ When giving presentations, refer to the dedicated section under Digital Communication.
- ➢ When handing out print documents, provide digital formats to persons with visual impairment before, if possible. Explore possibilities to provide all material in Braille or Large print on a needs-basis.

III. Digital Communication

A. Vision

Volt Europa and its member associations use digital communication as a primary source of communication, through the use of their websites, of social medias, of videos and presentations etc. It is primordial to ensure that all are accessible to all audiences, including to persons with sensory disabilities.

B. In Practice

1. Websites

We aim to have all out websites and online services fully compliant with WCAG 2.1, to ensure operability for visually impaired users as well as user with limited motor skills, with special attention given to the following:[4]

---

[3] For a checklist, refer to University of Glasgow, Accessible Events Checklist, available at https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_386384_en.pdf

- ➢ Consistently use semantic structure to clearly define different text levels. This includes headings (i.e.: <h1>, <h2>,...), lists (i.e.: <ol>, <li>, ...) and paragraphs.
- ➢ Ensure that the website allows for full keyboard navigation.[5]
- ➢ Ensure high-contrast colour schemes across the entire website.[6]
- ➢ Include easy-to-access possibilities to invert colours and customise text-size, contrast or other variables.[7]
- ➢ Clearly label all links on the front end. Do not write "Click here" on buttons, but use specific explainers, e.g. "Subscribe here". On the back end, do not use standard labelling, e.g. "Link", but clearly distinguishable descriptors.
- ➢ Give sufficient white space next to all links, so that users with limited motor skills can select them easily. Set links apart from text, e.g. by underlining them.
- ➢ Provide alternative text to all images, visuals, graphs etc.[8]
- ➢ Provide crucial information in sign language.[9]
- ➢ When using forms, mark all instructions with a label element, identify mandatory fields in a non-visual way and provide textual feedback on errors or confirmations of submissions.
- ➢ Wherever auditory communication is encouraged, provide for alternative forms of text-based communication or sign-language interpretation.
- ➢ Only use authentication plug-ins with visual elements, if there is an alternative audio output. Commonly used reCaptcha is also not accessible for blind or/and partially sighted users.
- ➢ Minimize or completely abolish all pop-up windows.
- ➢ Minimize collapsed drop-down menus.

2. <u>Social medias</u>

Both Twitter and Facebook are in principle very accessible. However, some small steps exist to make them fully inclusive, especially for persons with visual impairments:

---

[4] See Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, available at https://www.w3.org/TR/2018/REC-WCAG21-20180605/

[5] For further information, refer to Nielsen Norman Group, Keyboard-Only Navigation for Improved Accessibility, available at
https://www.nngroup.com/articles/keyboard-accessibility/

[6] To check for contrast-compliance, refer to MSF&W, Color Contrast Ratio Calculator, available at
www.msfw.com/Services/ContrastRatioCalculator

[7] For an example refer to BSVO, Austrian Federation of the Blind and Partially Sighted, available at:
http://www.blindenverband.at/en/home

[8] For implementation refer to webcredible, Writing effective ALT text for images, available at
 https://www.webcredible.com/blog/writing-effective-alt-text-images/

[9] For an implementation example, refer to Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, Startseite, available at: http://www.bmas.de/DE/Startseite/start.html

- ➢ Activate the accessibility features of the Twitter browser application. When uploading images, graphics, visuals, always add an image description.[10]
- ➢ Adding image descriptions also works for some third-party apps such as TweetDeck.[11] However, accessibility through third-party apps works less reliably than the desktop app.
- ➢ When using multi-word hashtags, e.g. #JoinTheChange, capitalise each one.
- ➢ Bear in mind that tagging twitter users in images is not screen-reader compatible, but there is no other way of doing this in an accessible way.
- ➢ Bear in mind that GIFs are not accessible to persons with visual impairment.
- ➢ Add alternative text to all images uploaded on Facebook.[12]
- ➢ Add captioning to all videos uploaded on Facebook. This can be done in multiple languages.[13]

3. Videos

Videos have limited accessibility for persons with visual and auditory disabilities. There are well-established tweaks to increase their inclusive potential:

- ➢ Systematically include clearly legible subtitling in all videos, either as subtitles (visible for all) or as closed-captioning (opt-in approach). Where necessary, also include non-speech elements, i.e. "People cheering".[14]
- ➢ Provide full transcript in additional text document and signal its availability next to/directly after the video.[15]
- ➢ In videos with interview snippets only, integrate lower-third inserts (e.g.: Andrea Venzon, President of Volt Europa) into the spoken text once. Most blind viewers will subsequently recognise the voice.
- ➢ In more complex videos, explore possibilities for audio description.[16]

---

[10] See for detailed instructions, refer to Twitter, How to mke images accesssible for people, available at https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/picture-descriptions

[11] See more at 9to5Mac, TweetDeck focuses on accessibility as it rolls out support for image descriptions, available at https://9to5mac.com/2018/07/03/tweetdeck-image-descriptions/

[12] For technical implementation refer to Facebook Help Center, How do I edit the alternative text for a photo?, available at https://www.facebook.com/help/www/214124458607871

[13] For technical implementation refer to Facebook Help Center, How do I add or remove captions on my video?, available at https://www.facebook.com/help/www/261764017354370?help

[14] For technical implementation, refer to YouTube Help, Add your own subtitles & closed captions, available at https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2734796?hl=en

[15] For a free-of-charge transcription application, refer to oTranscribe, Start Transcribing, available at www.otranscribe.com

[16] For technical implementation, refer to Media Access Australia, How to audio describe a YouTube video, available at https://mediaaccess.org.au/. For implementation guidelines, refer to ACB, The Audio Description Project, available at http://www.acb.org/adp/guidelines.html.

4. **Presentations**

Given presentations are in principle not accessible to persons with hearing impairments. Presentation slides are in principle not accessible to persons with visual impairments. To maximise inclusive presentations:

➢ Use few, high contrast colours, sufficiently large font sizes and legible fonts.
➢ Provide alternative text for images, graphs and other visuals.
➢ Provide text/script from slides in accessible Word document in advance.
➢ Explore possibilities for simultaneous sign interpreters. Keep in mind, that each country has its (not mutually comprehensible) sign language.

IV. **Print Communications**

A. **Vision**

Whenever using print communications, Volt Europa and its member associations should ensure that they are accessible to all audiences, including to persons with sensory disabilities, so that all persons may read printed Volt documents with ease.

B. **In Practice**

1. **Word Documents**

➢ When exporting from Google Drive, do not download as PDF directly. Instead select "File > Download as > .docx", then export to PDF from there.
➢ When using Word 2010, activate and make use of the built-in accessibility checker.[17]
➢ Avoid using OpenOffice when possible, as it does not work equally well with all assistive technologies available for blind or/and partially sighted readers.
➢ Indicate the main language of documents to ease screen-reader usage.
➢ Create a style with the respective function and apply it consistently to every heading in the document. Do not manually create individual headings by making them bold and by increasing the font size.
➢ When writing in black, select "automatic" as the chosen colour, so that it can be adapted automatically for partially sighted readers.

---

[17] For more information, refer to ADOD Project, Technique 10. Check Accessibility, available at https://adod.idrc.ocadu.ca/word2010#tech10

- ➢ Always use sans serif fonts in adequate font sizes (minimum 12pt., better 14pt.). Avoid thin fonts.[18]
- ➢ Use left-aligned text instead of justified text and avoid multi-column texts.
- ➢ For tabular data, use the correct table markup. Do not use spaces, tabs and line breaks to emulate the visual table layout.
- ➢ When making corrections or remarks on document, use the built-in feature to track changes. Colours and other design-based markup are not detectable.
- ➢ When using colours to convey meaning, always provide a non-visual explanation.
- ➢ Add alternative text descriptions to all images. Complex images (such as graphs, schemes, screenshots, maps etc.) require a complete equivalent in text.[19]
- ➢ Bear in mind that no in-text referencing (footnotes, endnotes, text marks) is fully accessible for readers with visual impairment. Always include all relevant information in the main text body.
- ➢ Avoid capitalisation for readers with cognitive disabilities.
- ➢ Avoid text in an image or in a text box.
- ➢ Avoid built-in form controls with Microsoft Office.

2. <u>PDF Documents</u>

- ➢ If the source Word document is accessible, the complementing PDF document will be accessible too. If the source file is lacking in accessibility, PDF conversion will in no way improve the situation. Scanned texts in PDF-documents are not accessible.
- ➢ In the "Save as" dialog box, make sure to select the Options button. Under "Include non-printing information", ensure that the Document structure tags for the accessibility checkbox is selected.

3. <u>Other Brochures and Leaflets</u>

If source files are designed with accessibility in mind, they will also be better suited for partially sighted readers as well as readers with cognitive disabilities. The most important aspects are to:

- ➢ Set sufficient contrast levels.[20]
- ➢ Use adequate font sizes.[21]

---

[18] Good free font types are for instance: Verdana, Arial, Calibri, TheSans Regular, MetaPlus Normal

[19] For implementation in Microsoft Word refer to ACCESS, Adding Alt Text to Images in Microsoft Word, available at http://accessproject.colostate.edu.

[20] For print contrast calculation, refer to DBSV, Leserlich: Kontrastrechner, available at http://leserlich.info/werkzeuge/kontrastrechner/index.php

➢ Leave sufficient white space and follow a clear page layout.[22]
➢ Consider audio files as alternative form of publication.[23]

---

[21] For possible orientation, refer to DBSV, Leserlich: Schriftgrößenrechner, available at
http://leserlich.info/werkzeuge/schriftgroessenrechner/index.php
[22] For the (conflicting) needs of persons with different disabilities, refer to the visuals at the end of Digital
Arts, How to design websites for people with disabilities in 2017, available at
https://www.digitalartsonline.co.uk
[23] For information on DAISY-Files, refer to EBU, How to design websites for people with disabilities in
2017, available at http://www.euroblind.org/publications-and-resources/