Volt's Mapping of Policies

Edition 8.1

Challenge 5+1 - EU Reform

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Challenge +1 - EU Reform

I. Vision for Europe

The European Union is our common project. Following centuries of conflict, we have managed to come together and build a Union that has **ensured peace and prosperity** for over sixty years. **We are proud** of this achievement.

Yet, the Europe we live in has its shortcomings. While others have enjoyed a quicker recovery from the economic crisis, EU countries have remained stuck in their austerity plans and structural deficiencies. Adding to inefficient and opaque public administrations, this has led to **high unemployment rates,** impeding investment and the growth of small businesses. Larger companies have benefited from easier access to a wider market and enjoyed cheaper labour, but workers have **not received harmonised social protections**. Wealthy individuals and companies also continue exploiting legal differences between countries to **avoid paying their fair share**, making everyone else foot the bill. And overall, people **do not feel represented** in the Union and see decisions as imposed upon them from above.

Volt was born out of a crisis of European integration in a time of mistrust for common endeavours. We came together to affirm the strength of the European project, our commitment to joint efforts, and our belief in our shared future. Ours is a message of hope, of audacity, and of solidarity. A message for all to see that the sirens of division will not tear down what we have patiently built. Volt rose in order to be a pillar of the European project and to re-energise its construction. Volt offers European citizens a new vision for Europe, one that **embraces our common aspirations** and remedies our shortcomings.

We believe in a Europe that balances the freedoms of its single market with **strengthened social protections and inclusion**, where companies and labour can move around everywhere and where this flexibility is not detrimental to workers anywhere. Our vision is therefore that of a **social Europe** that successive leaders have often mentioned but never implemented. We support a Europe where solidarity means supporting each other and accepting joint responsibility for our common future, where we actively support the development of our poorer regions and help **raise their standard of living**, and where citizens across the Union can come together to defend their common interests.

We believe in a Europe that **works equally for all**, not just for the privileged few. A Europe where individuals and companies contribute their fair share wherever they may live in the Union. Our vision is therefore that of a Europe that **guarantees equal**

access to education, to healthcare and social protection, and to employment opportunities for all. One where citizens across the continent have the same rights, and trust that they all **contribute and benefit equally** from their involvement.

Finally, we believe in a Europe that ensures the **full representation** of all citizens and opinions. A Europe where citizens of all States, large and small, have their voices heard and their interests represented. Our vision is therefore that of a Europe where a **vibrant democracy** creates an **open space for debate** and allows for all to participate and be recognised and respected in their **diversity**. One where citizens directly elect all their European representatives, hold them accountable for their positions, and have their needs included in the decisions we make for us all. We believe that this new Europe will enable us to be captains of our lives and choices, and to strive for the achievement of our individual ambitions while being part of a stronger community – a community of values.

Beyond its boundaries and despite its flaws, the European project carries a message for the world. It is a testament that centuries of war and opposition can be overcome by common values, that we have more in common than what divides us, and that we can shape our destiny together. Some support a world of "each country for itself"; we have chosen a different course, one of collaboration, where commonly-agreed rules bind the strong and protect the weak, and we are all the better for it. If history is about the choices we make, then we choose to create a more robust and more sustainable Union for future generations and the world at large.

Through the shared peace and prosperity it has provided, Europe has been a tremendous **force for good** in our lives. We are convinced that current shortcomings can and must be addressed through a better Europe. We believe that with more inclusive and more representative institutions, we can create a **new sense of community** based on common values, and together, united, ensure a **better life for all**.

II.   **Institutional Reform and Governance**

Reform of the European Union must start with the reform of its governance and institutions. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and the EU can no longer remain half-integrated and half-split, economically unified and politically nationalised. Therefore, the solution to the Union's ongoing troubles is not a question of "more Europe" or "less Europe", but of a "better Europe", including better institutions.

We believe in democracy; we believe that democracy is the best political system for protecting our individual liberties, human rights, and the rule of law.

And if we believe in democracy, we cannot circumscribe it to certain areas of policy-making only; we must instead exercise it at the local level, at the national level, and at the European level. This very democracy, at all levels, is the key to restoring the trust of European citizens in their institutions, and in agreeing on common solutions to common problems. As we can already see in our national systems, democracy was never about all agreeing – this we can never do – but about managing our disagreements and building a fair decision-making process that we can all support.

Expanding and ensuring democracy at the European level will require fundamental changes in our institutions: some we can achieve right away, yet others will require treaty changes. Volt is fully aware of the difficulty of reforming EU institutions, but we will not let this deter us from pushing for reform in favour of more transparency, more efficiency, and true democracy. This is the only way to achieve a qualitative change and finally realise a federal Europe.

The proposals below are further detailed in Volt's adopted *Provisions for a European Constitution*.

A. <u>General principles</u>

First and foremost in the establishment of good governance and a good government are guiding principles, which all institutions and organisational decisions must aim to entrench. In its policy proposals, Volt follows six guiding principles.

➢ *Democracy.* Volt supports institutions that give more decision-making power to the European people. This implies both ensuring that citizens' representatives hold the bulk of the power and that these representatives have incentives to represent the general interests of their constituency.

➢ *Subsidiarity.* Volt supports increased competencies at the European level only if that is the level at which they are best handled. All matters should be handled by the most appropriate level of government.

➢ *Efficiency.* Volt supports the establishment of institutions that can act, in particular those that are not gridlocked by the need for consensus.

➢ *Transparency.* Volt supports popular involvement in political decision-making and believes that the people need to have access to what their representatives discuss and decide.

➢ *Clarity.* Unlike the current institutional set-up, Volt supports institutions and procedures that citizens can understand and make their own.

➢ ***Ease of citizen involvement.***[1] Volt supports a system that, from elections to popular contributions, is designed to simplify and encourage citizens' involvement. Our policy proposals below rest upon these principles.

➢ **Future Fit (Ready):** Volt reflects their decision-making with regards to the needs of present and future generations.

B. The legislative branch

Expressing the voice of the people through their representatives, the legislative branch is the most important institution in a democratic system. It must be elected democratically and be as close to the people as possible, and empowered to draft, discuss and adopt our legislation. Despite national differences, this is a democratic requirement that all European countries have long adhered to, and enshrining democracy at the European level requires a similar arrangement.

The current European legislature is limited in many ways. The European Parliament is directly elected, but its election modalities differ from country to country, and MEPs are often elected at the national level, not locally. Despite having increased its role among European institutions, the European Parliament also still lacks the basic power to draft legislation. And, for its part, the Council of the European Union is made up of various configurations of national ministers depending on the topic under discussion, and often trumps the legislative power of Parliament. As a consequence, some legislation is only passed if there is consensus among the national ministers, bypassing any involvement from the Parliament. Finally, the European Council, an executive body whose role is limited to strategic decision-making by the Treaty of Lisbon, regularly intervenes in day-to-day decision-making, bypassing the regular legislative process.

➢ **Give the European Parliament the right to legislative initiative.** A Parliament consisting of directly elected representatives is the best-suited body to design laws that respond to the people's demands and needs. As a first step for a more democratic law-making process, Volt supports allowing the European Parliament to initiate laws by granting it the right to legislative initiative. Empowered with this right, the European Parliament will finally be able to propose and discuss legislative proposals stemming directly from the representatives of the people, and not at the initiative or through the filter of national or European executives.

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[1] For more details, see Citizen Empowerment, Strengthen citizens' ability to influence politics, Strengthen ability of citizens to influence politics beyond elections, Empower citizens and government to take concrete action.

➢ **Harmonise the adoption of EU legislation.** Currently, the adoption of legislation depends on the topic under discussion. Volt supports submitting all European legislation to both EU legislative bodies – Parliament and Council – for it to become law when approved by both. In case of lingering disagreements between both houses, a dedicated mechanism will attempt to iron out differences. Should there remain disagreements, the European Parliament, as the direct representative of the people, must have the final say.

➢ **Reform the election of the European Parliament.** The current "degressive proportionality" negates the core principle of "one person, one vote" which ensures equal say for all citizens in the political system. Volt therefore proposes a voting system that enshrines this principle and combines the election of representatives at the lowest level possible with the proportional representation of political parties in Parliament.
  ○ In this system, Member States are divided into electoral districts of roughly equal population; this division should be made, as far as possible, along pre-existing administrative boundaries, and will be controlled by an independent electoral commission to avoid attempts at gerrymandering.
  ○ Citizens will have two votes on their voting ballot: one for their local representative – one for each electoral district, thereby ensuring the election of representatives close to the citizens – and one for national lists of European political parties – filling supplementing seats to ensure fair party proportionality in Parliament. The details will feature in a European Electoral Law and apply equally to all Member States.
  ○ Volt also support the direct election of the President of the European Parliament by Members of Parliament.

➢ **Reform the Council of the European Union.** Formerly known as the Council of Ministers, the Council is the EU's second legislative chamber and currently gathers ministers of Member States in charge of the topic under discussion. In the short term, and in order to bring coherence into the Council's work, Volt supports abolishing the Council's system of topic-based configurations and replacing them with a single representative for each State. As is the case in Parliament, the Council's work will be split between initial discussions in preparatory committees composed of a small group of representatives, and plenary sessions for discussions, amendments, and vote.

➢ **Turn the Council of the European Union into a full-fledged legislative chambre.** In the longer term, Volt strongly supports further democratisation of the Council of the European Union through the election of its members either directly by the citizens of the European Union or by States' lower houses. This upper house would ensure the equal representation of States or feature a low level of demographic proportionality. This would also counterbalance population-based apportionment in the European Parliament and strengthen

the representation of smaller Member States. Volt also supports terminating the current practice of a rotating presidency. Under this system, every country leads the Council for six months; despite a welcome alternance in leadership, this system prevents any long-term work and keeps important policies issues from being followed through, since the responsible staff is constantly changing. Volt proposes the direct election of a President of the Council by Council members.

➢ **Improve transparency provisions.**
  ○ According to our general principles, Volt calls for full transparency of the legislative branch, where discussions are broadcast live and recorded, and each representative's vote is registered and made public.
  ○ As a follow-up measure, Volt supports incorporating an obligation for members of the legislatures to vote, and where they do not feel that any choice is appropriate, they may submit a blank ballot.
  ○ When the vote is for an election, in order to give a proper voice to blank ballots and popular discontent, Volt supports invalidating votes with a majority of blank ballots and re-organising them with new candidates.
  ○ In order to prevent backroom deals and late-night arrangements that are clearly detrimental to the proper functioning of democracy, Volt proposes a seventy-two-hour delay between the online publication of a bill and its vote in either legislative house. This is to ensure that citizens and the watchful press are provided at least the minimum amount of time to review and react to the bills that are voted on by representatives.

C. <u>The executive branch</u>

The executive branch has the crucial role of guiding the implementation of laws and contributing to the policy-making process. In order to carry out its duties, it must be reformed to properly reflect popular opinion and be made more efficient in its actions.

➢ **Enforce existing limits on, and eventually abolish, the European Council.** The European Council currently consists of the European Heads of State or government. In the short term, Volt recalls that its prerogatives must be strictly limited to those prescribed in the treaties, which are to provide "the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and [define] the general political directions and priorities thereof." It is clearly stated that "it shall not exercise legislative functions." The European Council should therefore not be involved in everyday political matters, leaving elected representatives to decide. The European Council also enshrines intergovernmental decision-making, which gives undue power to economically strong countries, who can strong-arm smaller or poorer neighbours. In line with our *democracy* principle, Volt

supports executive decision-making by truly European, supranational bodies. In the medium-term, Volt calls for the European Council to be abolished entirely.

➢ **Make the Commission's portfolios subject-oriented.** Despite a provision in the Lisbon Treaty to limit its size, the Commission is currently hampered in its functioning by the requirement to include as many commissioners as there are Member States, and to provide a portfolio to each Member State. These constraints – which no country would ever implement for itself – are clearly detrimental to the efficient work of the Commission. Volt calls for a removal of these rules and for the President of the Commission to freely decide on the size, composition and attribution of his/her/their team, with due regards for gender representation, but no considerations for national citizenship.

➢ **Strengthen the Spitzenkandidaten.** Following the introduction of the Spitzenkandidaten in 2014, Volt supports the nomination of leaders of parties or coalitions for European elections and proposes the election of the President of the Commission by a vote of the newly-elected European Parliament.

➢ **Move from Commissioners to Ministers, starting by creating positions for Finance and Foreign Ministers.** As an immediate measure, and in order to strengthen economic governance, Volt supports the creation of the position of finance minister for the Union. Likewise, in order to streamline the governance of foreign affairs, Volt calls for the full integration of the European External Action Service (EEAS) into the Commission and the replacement of the position of High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) by that of Foreign Minister.

➢ **Establish a true European government.** To thoroughly reform the European executive and increase citizens' empowerment, Volt supports the creation of a parliamentary democracy, where a Prime Minister, elected by and from the European Parliament, leads a federal cabinet of ministers and guides the day-to-day policy work of the Union. The Prime Minister will be directly accountable to Parliament and depend on its confidence; Parliament will be able to withdraw its confidence upon agreeing on a new Prime Minister. A European President elected either directly by citizens or by a body of democratically elected representatives will act as an overarching figure of unity. Among others, he/she will sign bills adopted by the legislative branch into law. In periods of regular political activity, the prerogatives of the President will be mostly limited to a ceremonial role.

D. The Judiciary

The Rule of Law is an essential foundation of democracy and ensures that laws are compatible with our principles and values and, in particular, do not infringe on citizens' fundamental freedoms.

➢ **Extend the prerogatives of the European Court of Justice** (ECJ)**.** In line with the Court's growth in recent years, Volt calls for the extension of the prerogatives of the ECJ to remove the need for national referral, and include a review of the compatibility of national and EU law with EU treaties, and the settlement of relevant disputes to which the European Union is a party, disputes between Member States, between a State and citizens of another State, between citizens of different States, and other similar cases. Appropriate and dissuasive sanctions must be made available to ensure that Member States abide by EU law.

➢ **Create regional branches of the ECJ.** Accompanying this increased role of the ECJ, Volt supports the creation of branches of the Court, with each branch covering a few countries, to make it better able to handle an increased caseload, place the court and European law closer to the citizens, and improve its overall efficiency.

E. Dispositions for European elected officials

Ensuring democracy and fair representation at the European level is as much a question of institutions as it is of elected officials.

➢ **Enforce gender equality on party lists.** Mindful of the importance of promoting gender equality in political representation, Volt proposes that all party lists for list-based elections be gender-alternate in their ranking of candidates, meaning the list would not have twice the same gender consecutively.

➢ **Reform regulations on European political parties.** Volt calls for a reform of the regulations on European political parties in order to support the creation of real European parties, in lieu of the collections of national parties we see today; this must include the recognition of national branches as part of one single European structure and the possibility of joint financing for campaigns across European countries, with proper regulations and monitoring.

➢ **Ensure a link between representatives and their constituents.** Within the framework of a reformed European voting system, and with a view to strengthen the link between European citizens and their European-level representatives and avoid parties sending unknown candidates across the Union, Volt supports a requirement for locally-elected MEPs to be residents of the district they seek election for.[2] Likewise, Volt supports candidates to the

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[2] An exception shall be made for MEPs who would have moved their residence from their district to Brussels following their election; they shall be able to run for re-election despite not being residents of their districts of election.

reformed Council to be citizens of the State they seek election for, regardless of whether this citizenship was acquired through birth or naturalisation.

➢ **Regulate elective mandates.** In order to propose the constant renewal of the European elected officials, Volt supports reasonable term limits for all European elective positions. These limits, which will be defined in the electoral law, will aim at allowing for the development of professional and qualified political elected officials, while avoiding the encroachment of politicians to their positions. Volt encourages durations of terms for the various mandates that allow a synchronisation of elections, in order to limit the occurrence of electoral campaigns that alter the regular political process. So as to limit the influence of money in politics, campaigns themselves will have a limited duration, and campaign finance, including fund acquisition and limits on spending, will be strictly controlled by an independent electoral commission.

➢ **Build trust in the people's representatives.** Finally, with due concern for the public trust in its institutions and representatives, Volt proposes strict requirements to prevent conflicts of interest. On the one hand, this means a requirement for all European elected officials and candidates to disclose past and present sources of income and any affiliation with or contribution to private businesses, lobby groups, political parties, and associations, be it in a paid or voluntary capacity. On the other hand, it means barring from eligibility to elective Office individuals duly convicted of certain crimes, including corruption, embezzlement, or wilful misuse of public funds. Considering popular representation as a full-time activity, Volt also believes that it is impossible to combine a European elective mandate with other mandates or positions.

F. Other provisions for good governance

Following these main measures for improved European governance and institutions come supplementary provisions aimed at clarifying and facilitating the Union's functionality.

➢ **Allow the creation of dedicated new institutions.** The European legislature must be given the power to establish all required agencies for the good functioning of the Union. In particular, Volt supports the establishment of an intelligence agency and the transformation of Europol into a real European law enforcement body. Mindful of the importance of regional development and planned and sustainable urbanisation, Volt supports the Committee of the Regions, as well as a new Committee of European Cities, as consultative bodies and platforms for dialogue and best-practice exchange for local decision-makers. Volt also supports the creation of an "Office for Future

Generations" on the European Level, which consults and audits decision-makers with advice and support towards the needs of present and future generations.

➢ **Facilitate working communications.** In order to facilitate the Union's policy work, Volt supports the adoption of English as the single *working* language for European institutions – this is irrespective of the languages spoken by the Member States and relates to our principle of Efficiency.

➢ **Set more predictable rules for secession.** Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty allows Member States to leave the Union but gives no indication as to the way to reach this decision. In order to strengthen rule-based processes and increase predictability, Volt supports the adoption of harmonised rules for secession at the EU level. Volt recognises the complexity of this issue and calls for an open debate for the adoption of proposed rules.

➢ **Establish a clear and harmonised framework for regional self-determination.**[3]
  ○ Seeking to bring all Europeans together for the benefit of all and believing that we are stronger when we come together, Volt sees secession from a Member State as a last resort. Volt therefore strongly encourages Member States to take all necessary measures to ensure the full representation of all citizens and to account for the legitimate recognition of regional cultural identities. In this spirit, Volt encourages people to work on living together in good faith and emphasises the need for open and inclusive dialogue between local, national and European levels and for proper subsidiarity and decentralisation.[4]
  ○ Should a genuine effort at dialogue fail, if necessary with the intervention of a mediator, Volt recognises the right of a people to self-determinate via the organisation of a peaceful, legal and transparent process in full respect of the rule of law and with a clear assessment of the legal outcome of secession, including outstanding financial obligations.[5] Unless under exceptional circumstances, including

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[3] In this policy, Volt considers "region" any given determined area within a Member State, whether it formally holds the title of region or not.
[4] "A rational discourse about regional identities and economic, social and cultural interests could be a source of strength, draining away much of the peril from the current fractious secession conflicts." Social Europe, Learning From Catalonia: To Secede Or Not To Secede?, available at
https://www.socialeurope.eu/learning-catalonia-secede-not-secede
[5] "The constitutionalization of a right to secede emerges as a means to soothe secessionist tendencies (as with Quebec and Scotland) or prevent political escalation into a potential armed conflict (as with New Caledonia and Montenegro)." Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law, Secession,
available at http://oxcon.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law-mpeccol/law-mpeccol-e459

clear and large-scale violations of human rights,[6] a region should not unilaterally declare independence from its Member State.

- If a strong will for self-determination is expressed, for instance through a qualified majority and with a turnout threshold, Volt supports a negotiated process of secession between the self-determining region and its member-State; should a genuine and constructive effort at negotiations fail or one party willingly stall, Volt recommends the intervention of a European mediator – for instance, the proposed President of the EU[7] – to ensure the process moves forward.[8]

- Should the self-determining region choose to leave the European Union as well,[9] a negotiated process will take place with the Union. For self-determining regions wishing to remain in the Union, Volt recommends the creation of status of "Territory of the European Union", where the region would be temporarily placed following its secession from its Member State and before its potential access to full EU membership.[10] A Territory would remain subject to EU legislation and would be required to fulfil all obligations of a Member State. It will retain benefits such as full access to the single market and free movement; however, it would not benefit from new EU funding or investments and only have a non-voting representation in the European Parliament and no representation in the Council.[11] The decision to admit a Territory as a member of the Union would be similar to the regular accession procedure to EU membership.

➢ **Set up a two-tier integration system.** With the goal of promoting increased European integration and avoiding a blocking need for consensus, Volt supports proposals for a two-tiered integration model that allows willing countries to move forward with the integration of policy competences. This system should aim at deepening integration in a coherent manner, and Volt strongly opposes "à la carte" models where Member States pick and choose the

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[6] "Any attempt to claim legal secession [...] must at least show that: [...] the state from which they are seceding seriously violates their human rights; and there are no other effective remedies", American Society of International Law, Kosovo's Declaration of Independence: Self-Determination, Secession and Recognition, available at
https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/12/issue/2/kosovos-declaration-independence-self-determination-secession-and

[7] In the absence of a President of the EU, a mediator can be agreed by the parties or proposed by the European Parliament.

[8] Newsweek, Europe Must Step In and Resolve the Moves Toward Catalonia Secession, available at
http://www.newsweek.com/europe-must-step-and-resolve-moves-toward-catalonia-secession-693826

[9] In case of referendum for self-determination, voters should be provided the opportunity to express whether they wish to remain in or leave the Union.

[10] Max Planck Encyclopedia of Comparative Constitutional Law, Overseas Territories, Australia, France, Netherlands, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States of America, available at
http://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1076?prd=EPIL

[11] In either councils, in the current structure of the EU; in the only remaining Council, in Volt's proposed structure.

policies they subscribe to. In this system, countries willing to move forward with integration would make up the first tier and uniformly forge ahead together. This system must not seek to penalise members of the second tier but, on the contrary, give them incentives to join the first tier and contribute to a more integrated and unified Europe.

➢ **Draft and adopt a European Constitution.** Finally, in order to streamline the Union's functioning, Volt strongly supports the adoption of a European Constitution replacing existing EU treaties and detailing the fundamental rights and responsibilities of citizens and the EU's institutional arrangements. As a legal and political document, this Constitution should be concise, readable, and understandable by citizens. Unlike current treaties, it should not try and integrate all aspects and provisions of EU law, but focus on core institutional aspects and leave the rest for the legislature to record into regular EU legislation. Volt strongly supports the writing and adoption of this Constitution by representatives of European citizens. In particular, this constitution should include the points detailed in the following chapter. Details with regards to the underlying constitutional concepts can be found in the respective policy portfolio document, "Provisions for a European Constitution, underlying constitutional concepts".

G. Provisions for a European Constitution

1. Constitutional principles

In addition to the six principles guiding its reform of the European Union listed in the Mapping of Policies — democracy, subsidiarity, efficiency, transparency, clarity, and ease of citizens' involvement —, Volt subscribes to the following principles for any constitution of the European Union.

➢ **Republicanism.** Volt supports a republican form of government for European institutions where the European people, endowed with a common European citizenship, is the sovereign, and where the rule of law applies to all citizens equally. This provision is not meant to force a republican model on Member States so long as their institutions are democratic.

➢ **Representative democracy.** Given its attachment to individual liberties, Volt supports a system of representative democracy, where citizens periodically and freely elect their representatives to deliberate and decide on legislation.

➢ **Parliamentary system.** In line with a long-standing European tradition and in order to avoid an undue concentration of powers, Volt supports a parliamentary system of government, where the Union's executive stems from

and derives its democratic legitimacy from a majority of the European Parliament.

➢ **Federalism.** In order to ensure an efficient common government while respecting the EU's diversity, Volt supports a federal structure for the Union. The EU's federal government and its federated State governments share the EU's competences and are endowed with rights as prescribed in the constitution. While initially based on the EU's Member States and expected to remain largely stable, State boundaries may evolve following a constitutional process involving citizens.

➢ **Principle of subsidiarity.** As far as possible, competences shall be distributed to the level at which they are best handled. While cooperation between the federal and State levels shall be encouraged, the constitution shall entrust each level with relevant responsibilities and accountability. Where appropriate, we further encourage devolving competences and associated funds to the regional and local levels, for increased efficacy and the proper expression of Europe's regional diversity, including where these regions cross State borders.

➢ **Primacy of federal law.** Federal law shall have primacy over State law. In case of dispute, the federal judiciary shall decide on the interpretation of competences and may invalidate specific federal and, in certain cases prescribed by the Constitution, State laws.

➢ **Majority rule.** In line with our support for democracy, Volt supports decision-making processes based on majorities and explicitly opposes the unanimity principle. Exceptional cases, such as constitutional amendments, may require qualified majorities as prescribed in the Constitution.

2. <u>**Individual and collective rights**</u>

➢ **Recognise human rights.** Any Constitution for the European Union must include the recognition and respect of human rights and human rights texts, including, but not limited to, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These rights shall be inviolable and inalienable.

➢ **Respect and protect human rights.** The respect and protection of human rights shall be binding on Federal and State institutions. Rights may only be limited in the public interest, provided for by law and where the principle of proportionality is met. Individuals affected in their rights and freedoms shall have access to redress through the courts, with fair, effective and timely access to justice for all.

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3. Institutions

- **Legislature**
  - The European Parliament shall be the lower house of the legislature. It shall be directly elected according to [Volt's Improved Bundestag Method](#), which provides citizens with a vote for a candidate in a local constituency and another for a European party on a State-wide list.
  - The legislature shall comprise an upper house representing citizens as members of the States; its members shall be elected by citizens or by States' lower houses. States may be represented equally or with a low level of proportionality based on States' population. The upper house shall participate in the law-making process and constitutional amendments.
  - The Constitution shall detail the respective powers of both legislative houses. Each house shall have significant powers to influence the regular federal law-making process in a meaningful way and have the right to legislative initiative.
  - In particular, the process for bills to become law shall ensure that both legislative houses have a proper say, whilst striving to avoid legislative blockages. In case of persisting disagreements, a conciliation committee consisting of members of both houses may be convened. Should the bill proposed by this committee fail to be adopted, Parliament, as the direct representative of European citizens, may adopt the bill using a qualified majority.

- **Executive**
  - The President of the European Union shall be the Head of State. The President shall be elected by citizens or a body of democratically elected representatives and act as an overarching figure of unity with mostly ceremonial powers. The President shall sign bills into law and may refuse to do so upon clear and expressed concerns for a bill's constitutionality; he may send the bill back to the legislature for review or request a ruling from the Constitutional Court. The Constitution shall delineate a process for such cases.
  - A Federal Prime Minister shall be in charge of leading the government's political action via a cabinet of Federal Ministers. The Federal Prime Minister shall be elected by the European Parliament from its ranks. The European Parliament shall have the right to remove its confidence from

the Federal Prime Minister by agreeing on a new Prime Minister (known as a *constructive* vote of no-confidence); the exercise of this right may be suspended for fixed periods following the election of a Prime Minister and ahead of parliamentary elections.

➢ **Judiciary**
  ○ The judicial power of the Union shall be vested in a judiciary comprising a Constitutional Court, a Supreme Court, and lower courts as necessary.
  ○ The structure of the judiciary and the appointment process of its members shall be based on the values of independence and accountability. In particular, judges shall be protected from undue political interference.
  ○ In line with international standards,[12] an independent, non-political judicial council, comprising judicial and non-judicial members, shall contribute to Federal judicial appointments, as well as to additional administrative, supervisory or advisory roles. Specific requirements may apply to the appointment of judges of the Constitutional Court.
  ○ The Constitutional Court shall have the power to assess the constitutionality of Federal and State laws. Federal and, in certain cases prescribed by the Constitution, State laws may be invalidated. The Supreme Court may be the Constitutional Court or a separate court.

4. **Competences**

A European Constitution should address the distribution of competences, including at least the following competences.

➢ **Principle of subsidiarity.** Competences should be distributed to the level at which they are best handled. Cooperation between the Federal and State levels shall be encouraged. Unless explicitly stated otherwise in the Constitution for specific competences, the Federal level shall have the power to decide on the distribution of competences.

➢ **Exclusive Federal competences.** Some competences shall be reserved to the Federal level. For instance, the Federal government shall have exclusive competence in matters relating to foreign, defence and monetary policy. The European armed forces shall be under the responsibility of a European Minister of Defence and under parliamentary control.

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[12] These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, and the Minimum Standards of the International Bar Association.

➢ **Taxation powers.** The Federal legislature shall be empowered to directly and indirectly lay and collect federal taxes, duties, and any other relevant revenue for the European Union.

➢ **Constitutional amendments.** Amendments to the Constitution shall be initiated in a similar process as regular legislation but require the approval of both houses by a qualified majority prescribed in the constitution.

➢ **Amendment of Article 7 TEU**, in order to safeguard the values of the EU and to be able to act against violations. The votes in the procedure of Article 7 TEU must be able to be decided by two-thirds majority at all levels and in all bodies. As a nuclear option paragraphs must be added to Article 7 TEU, which provide the possibility of suspension and exclusion from the EU. Even after suspension or exclusion Groups and activists supporting the furthering of rule of law principles will receive continuing financial support.

➢ **Rule of law mechanism.** The European Treaties will be adapted in such a way that a future, tightened rule of law mechanism will make cuts in EU funds possible, even if just the values of the European Union are in danger, regardless of the use of EU funds. Decisions in this strengthened mechanism will be taken by the Commission and confirmed by the European Parliament with an absolute majority.

➢ **EU financial projects at the intergovernmental level.** EU financial projects are unlawfully blocked again to prevent decisions in other matters, Volt encourages nation states to implement financial projects such as the Recovery Fund outside the Council, which, as an enhanced cooperation, is possible under EU law. This option is suboptimal and should be a last resort to prevent values and economic progress from being played off against each other.

III. Economic & Finance Reform

A. Vision

Volt envisions a European economic and financial system that works for all its citizens and for European society as a whole. This means that the European economic system should serve all European citizens and enable them to pursue their individual ambitions and act as full members of European society. Volt believes that we can only flourish as individuals if we respect and contribute to a community based on common values which apply to all of us. These values and principles – solidarity, sustainability,

equal opportunities, liberty, justice and human dignity – build the groundwork for our community and must also apply to our economic and financial systems.

Volt believes that a strong Europe requires fiscal and monetary institutions, which (1) are democratically legitimised, (2) act in accordance with our shared norms, and (3) are able to act in the interest of the Union as a whole. Hence, we envision an institutional completion of the Eurozone, creating a better Union for all residents.

In terms of its economic setup, we believe in a European Union that holds true to being a Union of solidarity, in which every country feels responsible for the destiny of the Union. Hence, the individual States need to be responsible for their economic activity, and in times of sovereign debt crisis, States should be able to go into default. At the same time, automatic stabilisers should alleviate the hardship in times of crisis and a Eurozone+ Budget should serve as an emergency insurance to guarantee basic functions, such as unemployment benefits and payment of civil servants, if a State is stripped of its capacity to do so. The economic setup should smooth the buildup of asymmetric shocks, as monetary policy and interest rates cannot be adapted to individual economic conditions in a currency union. In sum, while European economic governance should always aim to function for all its citizens, in times of hardship there needs to be a social safety net that will ensure that the most vulnerable groups remain protected and that a minimum living standard is guaranteed.

B. Euro Summit & Eurogroup

With the creation of the European Monetary Union (EMU), the responsibility for monetary policies was transferred to a new European supranational institution, the European Central Bank, as single monetary authority. However, the economic policy-making decisions remained to be made by national governments. This became particularly evident during the Eurozone crisis, when the Heads of State or Government and the 18 Ministers of Finance and Economic Affairs served as key policy-makers. Economic policy-making was mainly done at the intergovernmental level, excluding the scrutiny of the European Parliament and the involvement of the Commission or EU Member States outside the Eurozone. Institutional manifestations are, for example, the Eurogroup and the Euro Summit. The Eurogroup entails informal meetings of the Eurozone's finance ministers, and played a decisive role in managing the Euro crisis. The Euro Summit is an informal platform for meetings between the Heads of State or Government of the Euro area.

➢ **Provide democratic legitimacy to EU economic policymaking and make it work for everyone.** Volt thus proposes economic and financial policy to be decided by the Parliament and Council as co-legislators. First, Finance Ministerial meetings need to be formalised in an entirely transparent setting in preparation for the transition to a two-chamber federal system. Informal meetings of, and decisions taken by, Heads of Governments in general, and in

particular of countries in the Eurozone, need to be abolished immediately to ensure the realisation of the principles of democracy and accountability by a clear divide of competency between legislative and executive branches. Therefore, the position of an EU Economic and Finance Minister will be established to increase democratic accountability for EU economic policy.

C. European Central Bank

The European Central Bank's (ECB) primary objective is to maintain price stability of the Eurosystem and of the single monetary policy to enable a "favourable economic environment and a high level of employment."[13]

➢ **Broaden the mandate of the ECB.** Ten years down the line, the effects of the Eurozone crisis – namely high unemployment, persistently low investment, and minimal economic growth – are still being felt, particularly in the South of Europe. This poses major societal challenges. Europe also faces global environmental challenges, such as environmental degradation and climate change. This is why, for improved monetary governance, Volt envisions an ECB that, while still firmly independent, is empowered with a wider mandate, including considerations of unemployment, sustainable growth, and crisis prevention and mitigation in its policy-making, similar to the mandate of the US FED.[14]

D. Eurozone+ Budget

All Eurozone countries share a common currency with common interest and exchange rates, while their position in the business cycle,[15] as well as the structure of their economies, may differ substantially.

➢ **Set up a Eurozone+ Budget.** In order to address this, a budget needs to be set up through new EU own-resources, including a common corporate tax and other means. This will have three major features: (1) Given the cyclical nature of the economy and taxes, the EU budget will implicitly smooth business cycles across countries. (2) Such a budget will allow for common European public goods (such as defense and transnational energy networks) to be financed at the European level. (3) Lastly, this budget will serve as an insurance mechanism in times of crises: Volt will allow for emergency funding at the European level to provide basic services such as unemployment benefits and payment for public sector workers, in case a State is incapable to fulfill these obligations.

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[13] European Central Bank, Objective of monetary policy, available at
https://www.ecb.europa.eu/mopo/intro/objective/html/index.en.html
[14] Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, The Federal Reserve's Dual Mandate, available at
https://www.chicagofed.org/research/dual-mandate/dual-mandate
[15] This indicator shows whether a country is doing well or not compared with the past performance.

While this budget will be primarily aimed at Eurozone Member States, it should be open for all other EU Member States for voluntary participation – hence, Eurozone+.

E. European Stability Mechanism

The European Stability Mechanism (ESM) is the Eurozone's bailout fund and a key mechanism for the stability of the Eurozone. It is currently run by national governments and thus works as an intergovernmental mechanism. Volt supports the ESM becoming an institution under EU law supervised by the European Parliament. The transformation of the ESM should respect the following three key aspects:

➢ **Make the ESM a credible backstop for banking resolution.**[16] The Single Resolution Fund lacks a fiscal backstop and is limited in its financial capacity. Whilst this may be sufficient for individual bank failures, the risk of this fund draining in a systemic crisis remains. As this would in turn reinforce the bank-sovereign nexus, there needs to be a credible European fiscal backstop. The ESM should provide this function by providing a standing credit facility backed by the ECB.

➢ **Integrate the ESM into regular EU law.** The current form of the ESM is dysfunctional and undemocratic. Decisions to provide financial assistance to a member country are not taken by a majority vote but by unanimity and require prior approval by some national parliaments. The European Parliament in contrast has no rights in this regard. The governance of the ESM should reflect common voting procedures in the EU (qualified majority voting), and should become a full EU body, subject to EU law and fully embedded in EU accountability mechanisms under the watchful eye of the European Parliament. In the short term, regarding governance, the ESM board should be comprised of national Finance Ministers as well as Euro area officials appointed by the European Council and elected by the European Parliament. In the long term, the ESM should fall under the competency of the EU Finance Minister, who will be accountable to the European Parliament.

➢ **Provide for debt restructuring under certain conditions.** Volt opposes any automatic debt restructuring, as it may give rise to self-fulfilling speculation against a State's insolvency. However, Volt acknowledges that there may be room to codify IMF practices concerning debt restructuring within the ESM, if debt sustainability is threatened. Nevertheless, any such move forward should be conditional on the completion of the banking union, the creation of a European safe asset and a solution for legacy debt.

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[16] Rolf Strauch, Speech at EBI Global Annual Conference on Banking Regulation, available at https://www.esm.europa.eu/speeches-and-presentations/%E2%80%9Ceuro-area-banks-deepening-monetary-union%E2%80%9D-speech-rolf-strauch

F. <u>Banking Supervision</u>

The single supervisory mechanism (SSM) is the first pillar of the banking union. Under the SSM, the ECB is the central prudential supervisor of financial institutions in the euro area and in non-euro EU countries that choose to join the SSM. The ECB directly supervises the largest banks, while national supervisors continue to monitor the remaining banks. The ECB and national supervisors work closely together to check that banks comply with EU banking rules and to tackle problems early on.[17]

- ➢ **Create a fully European banking supervision system.** Europe has progressed significantly with respect to banking supervision. The approval of a Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) allows for a harmonised approach to regulation, where the ECB and national central banks share responsibility and labour. 118 banks, comprising 82% of total banking assets in the Euro area, are now under direct scrutiny of the ECB.[18] Volt strongly supports the Europeanisation of Banking Supervision, as it creates a level playing field for European banks and increases financial stability through harmonised rules and increased transparency.

G. <u>Competences of an EU Economic and Finance Minister</u>

Currently, executive decisions in Eurozone and EU economic policy-making are being made in an opaque manner involving the Commission, the Eurogroup and Euro Summit.

- ➢ **Create an EU Economic and Finance Minister.** As a first step of economic governance reform, Volt supports the Commission's proposal to create a European Minister of Economy and Finance. This will strongly increase accountability and transparency in EU economic governance. In the short term, with the current institutional structure, this Minister would be both a European commissioner and chair monthly meetings of eurozone finance ministers – the so-called Eurogroup. The position should be created as soon as November 2019, when a new European commission takes office. The Minister will have to report to the European parliament and represent Europe on the international economic stage, such as the International Monetary Fund. Significantly, the ministerial role would be a pan-European job, rather than a Eurozone-only one - a sign to stress unity.[19] The inclusion of non-Euro countries under the

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[17] European Commission, Single supervisory mechanism, available at
https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/banking-union/single-supervisory-mechanism_en
[18] European Central Bank, The Single Supervisory Mechanism, available at
https://www.bankingsupervision.europa.eu/about/thessm/html/index.en.html
[19] The Guardian, Europe should have its own economy and finance minister, says EC, available at

representation of the EU Finance Minister will have to be subject to their compliance over the proposed EU fiscal policy reform. In the long term and with the abolishment of the Eurogroup, the position of EU Finance Minister will have its own ministerial staff, guide the implementation of economic and fiscal laws, and contribute to the policy-making process under the scrutiny of the legislative branches.

H. EU Corporate Tax

In order to stop tax evasion and generate tax revenues at the European level that feed a European Budget, Volt proposes to introduce an EU Corporate Tax. The tax implementation will centre around three critical issues:

➢ **Introduce an EU-wide definition on how to calculate corporate taxes to reduce avoidance opportunities.** An EU-wide definition of what constitutes taxable profits or revenues needs to be introduced. Clear accounting rules that are equal across Member States will determine how taxable income is calculated, which is needed in order to allow taxation where revenue and profits are generated. Companies active in one country and lacking agility due to limited financial and legal resources should not be subject to unfair competition with multinationals. Introducing a common corporate tax base at the EU level should be the first step, although a global deal is the ultimate goal. In particular, common definitions on what can be accounted for as Research & Development expenses, Debt and Equity financing, as well as Investments and Depreciation need to be established. Clear rules to link tax payments to the origin of the income need to be created, as do geographical rules that allow for the nations to benefit from profits that are made within their jurisdiction.

➢ **Introduce a baseline corporate tax rate to fight tax havens.** Volt supports a baseline corporate tax rate across the Union and to be levied by EU institutions; Member States will be able to supplement this with a State-level rate.

➢ **Implement monitoring practices within large corporations.** A full-scale review of corporate tax systems across EU countries should be implemented to monitor practices within large corporations, in particular transnational corporations, that aim at reducing their tax burden through sophisticated legal structures with no real economic purpose. This effort is complementary to the OECD's BEPS initiative and aims at monitoring and countering new tax evasion practices.

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https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/dec/06/europe-should-have-its-own-minister-of-economy-and-finance-says-ec

➢ **Register beneficial owners of every company, organisation, and trust.**[20] Tax evasion comes at a dramatic cost for societies and therefore cannot be tolerated, especially when perpetrated by large and profitable corporations. A first step in fighting tax evasion is to force offshore/mailbox companies, organisations, and trusts to register their beneficial owners in a compulsory and public registry.

I. Concentration charges

Within the Eurozone, the fate of a State and its banking sector are intimately linked to each other due to the so-called "home bias". This "home bias" describes a situation in which banks hold significant portions of their own State's debt (e.g. government bonds), creating a situation where failure of any of the two parties can easily lead to the failure of the other. This vicious dependency of banks and States is called the "sovereign-bank nexus".

➢ **Break the sovereign-bank nexus.**[21] If a sovereign restructuring regime is to be credible, then the sovereign-bank nexus must be broken for good. In order to build on efforts of reducing contagion from banks to States, Volt proposes the introduction of concentration risk charges for sovereign exposures to reduce contagion from States to banks. This could take the form where banks would have to diversify their national bond portfolio and also hold bonds from States other than their 'own'. Introducing capital charges for concentrations to sovereigns will incentivise a diversification of banks' sovereign portfolios across Eurozone Member States. This allows for risk-sharing and an orderly default, if necessary.

J. European deposit insurance

➢ **Create an EU-wide deposit insurance.** A European Deposit Insurance will add to breaking the sovereign-bank nexus. This is because the risk of bank runs is no longer dependent on the solvency of the sovereign that provides the deposit insurance. Such a Europeanisation of deposit insurance consequently reduces the likelihood of bank runs and thereby increases financial stability. Due to moral hazard concerns, its introduction must be conditional on a prior diversification of sovereign exposures and a risk reduction in balance sheets.

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[20] Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Recommendations 24 and 25, available at
https://rm.coe.int/international-standards-on-combating-money-laundering-and-the-financin/16807150db
[21] Nicolas Veron, Bruegel & Peterson, Sovereign Concentration Charges: A New Regime for Banks' Sovereign Exposures, available at
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU%282017%2960211
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This means that a bank has to demonstrate it has invested in a wide range of areas, so that its risk on investment is responsibly spread out. Otherwise, banks might use the new insurance scheme to pile into riskier investments, undermining financial stability.

K. The Stability and Growth Pact

The Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) is an agreement, among the 28 Member States of the EU aimed to facilitate and maintain the stability of the EMU by ensuring fiscal discipline and agreeing on common limits on government deficits (3% of GDP) and debt (60% of GDP).

> ➢ **Reform the SGP.** The Stability and Growth Pact proved to be ineffective at preventing the buildup of unsustainable debt levels. The pact is too inflexible to allow for strong countercyclical policies once a crisis materialises, and its rules prevent necessary smart and sustainable investment across Europe and lead to unnecessary and harmful reductions in public service provisions. This stifles economic growth, leading to social and political instability, distrust, and alienation. Volt proposes transparent fiscal rules which incentivise prudent fiscal policies and allow for flexibility in counteracting cases of macroeconomic shock.

IV.   Justice & Home Affairs

A. Vision

Volt wants a Europe that ensures citizens' rights are respected throughout the Union. Citizens must be able to participate fully in the democratic process. This includes the right to vote for and stand as a candidate wherever they are registered as a resident, be it in local, regional, national, or European elections. Citizens must not be discriminated against on the basis of their nationality, sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

Volt wants a Europe in which citizens shall be able to move and reside freely within the EU. This is one of the four pillars on which European integration rests, and is essential for a prosperous, free, and inclusive European society. To guarantee free movement internally, external borders need to be managed more effectively, efficiently and humanely. This is a common challenge that should not be left to individual States, but one that Europe should take on as a community respecting the common principle of solidarity.

Volt wants a Europe whose Member States adhere to the principles of democracy and the rule of law, building on the European Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. These principles are the bedrock of the political community: both aspiring and current Member States need to fully respect them, and if these are violated, Europe must have the power to restore them.

Volt wants a Europe that protects its citizens and makes them feel secure. Europe needs more than just police cooperation and intelligence sharing between Member States; it needs its own capacities and legal competence to safeguard the security of its people. This is much more important than the sensitivities and prestige of national elites. At the same time, threat perceptions by political leaders should not be exaggerated; the level of objective security is unprecedented in European history, and it is the responsibility of political actors to act on objective facts and not exaggerate threats to pursue their own political agendas.

B. Border protection

The protection of European borders should become an exclusive competence of the European Union. Current national border protection should be integrated into a coherent and efficient European border protection system. The EU needs a political community that supports all its Member States when necessary to protect common borders. Volt believes we must insist on a political community that ensures human rights are upheld throughout its jurisdiction, including on its borders and beyond.

A functioning protection of the EU border is a prerequisite for the free movement of people within the EU. Therefore, we want to create and support a system that upholds the integrity of EU borders, fights cross-border crime, and ensures the safety of European residents. We want an EU border protection system that provides initial reception of asylum seekers in an orderly and humane way, upholds European values, and makes sure that first points of contact with refugees exemplify what European citizens stand for.

➢ **Develop the capacities of a fully operational European border protection agency.** Volt supports developing the European Border and Coast Guard Agency from an intergovernmental agency that largely coordinates national services to an integrated European agency with a full mandate and capabilities to act and react. The European agency will be staffed with its own border guards and equipment through new funds from the EU budget, to act independently of Member States' contributions. Initially, it will conduct joint trainings for national border guards. Later, this will develop to integrate national structures into the European agency in order to avoid the inefficiencies that come from duplication.

➢ **Ensure European Parliamentary scrutiny.** Competencies and budgets need to be clarified between EU institutions and Member States in order to increase transparency, while ensuring that mixed accountabilities between national and European parliaments are a matter of the past. Ultimately, there needs to be clear parliamentary control by the European Parliament of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and the future European border protection agency.

➢ **Ensure the protection of values at our borders.** The protection of our borders goes hand in hand with the protection of our shared values. It is here that people from all over the world receive their first impression of Europe. Their aspirations for building a better life in Europe must be encouraged by how we welcome them; they must always be treated with respect and dignity, as well as with respect to the rule of law. Therefore, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights should be a guidepost for the agency, incorporated in its mission statement, compliance system and accountability to the European Parliament. The disruption of human smuggling and trafficking networks should always go hand in hand with search and rescue operations, as well as welcoming operations for asylum seekers and refugees.

➢ **The ongoing intra-Schengen border controls should stop as soon as we have a functioning external EU border.** The personnel involved in controlling intra-Schengen borders should instead be deployed to external borders, including internal external borders (e.g. international airports), on a rotating basis, with extra compensation for being far away from home. Countries without an external border should commit a quota of personnel to the external border based on their population size. Where this turns out not to be feasible, countries should provide extra funding for the protection of the external border instead.

C. European police, intelligence, and cyber security

Volt supports the unification of national police, intelligence, and cyber security services across Europe, starting with automatic information-sharing, to identify and address cross-border crimes and threats. As the EU's law enforcement agency, Europol's competences in these areas should be gradually extended, its capabilities strengthened, and it should be brought under tighter parliamentary oversight. In the long term, the agency should develop into the EU's federal-level police department.

➢ **Extend Europol's competences.** Cooperation between European police agencies on information sharing should be strengthened. There should be more binding mechanisms for sharing information that is vital for combating cross-border crime, terrorism and cyber security threats. Europol's direct access to relevant information from Member States' police forces should be

considered. In the long-term, Europol should be given exclusive competence for fighting cross-border crime, terrorism and cyber security threats.

➢ **Build up Europol's capabilities.** Europol's independent operative capabilities should be strengthened gradually. At first, building up cyber security capabilities must be a priority; Member States should channel their resources into common European cyber security capabilities instead of building up national cyber security agencies. Capabilities should also be developed to support each Member State's fight against cross-border crime and terrorism. This would be the basis for an independent federal-level operative capability.

➢ **Strengthen European parliamentary oversight.** As Europol's competences and capabilities are expanded, its democratic accountability must be strengthened. There should be a committee to account for Europol's operations, as well as a Commissioner in charge of Europol. Interior ministers of the Member States should be involved in this process as well, especially with regard to cooperation between national police services.

➢ **Establish a European corps** to close the gap in the internal security architecture. New threats like military-style terrorism or large scale natural disasters are borderless and bring our current security authorities to their limits in manpower and competences. In order to cope with these challenges, we need a new security agency, a European corps, which will support national and local forces by performing civilian, police and partly military tasks. This corps will consist of reservists, and can be requested by any Member State for assisting local security forces, including stepping in after terrorist attacks to ensure public order and protect strategically important and representative facilities and places. It will also help in the event of natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, forest fires, or epidemics with equipment, coordination, and manpower. Furthermore, this European corps can fulfil representative tasks like giving honour at State visits on a European level. National equivalent, such as the newly-formed French National Guard, should be merged in this European corps.

D. Migration and refugee policy

Volt believes that we need a common EU Migration and Refugee Policy to define a unified approach to manage inward migration and refugee flows. Member States need to take major steps towards a common system to handle applications and appeals, resettle migrants among Member States, and return rejected applicants to their countries of origin. But there is more scope for the EU to use its leverage to sign readmission agreements with countries of origin, or to support Member States in brokering readmission agreements. The EU can also deploy a wide range of incentives to secure readmission agreements, from visa policies to bilateral aid.

This common policy approach should operate as part of a larger framework for international cooperation on the prevention and mitigation of refugee crises. This is why the Dublin system needs to be reformed and a new settlement system defined, for instance based on population, population density, wealth, age, and growth. The amended system should provide for penalties for contravening countries.

1. Abiding by the UN Refugee Convention

A common EU asylum agreement must include binding mechanisms to ensure that all EU Member States follow the provisions of the UN Refugee Convention.[22] This includes:[23]

➢ **Work together with the developing world**, which is hosting more than 80% of the world's refugees,[24] to reform the international refugee system.

➢ **Anticipate future refugee movements**. It is necessary for the EU to not simply respond to, but also plan for refugee movements.
  ○ Put aside a budget for refugee protection every year, even when there is no refugee movement. In the long term, it will definitely be necessary to have this, because, for example, of the rising number of climate refugees the EU will have to process.
  ○ Identify, inventarise, and register possible accommodation for future refugee flows. The EU should have an accessible database of housing where refugees can stay for five to seven years to ensure continuous protection.
  ○ Create burden-sharing allocations in advance of refugee movements. Volt advocates quotas for Member States to allocate refugees.

➢ **Strengthen cooperation with UNHCR.** The EU must increase its support for UNHCR and create increased synergies between its own refugee management frameworks and the work of UNHCR.

2. Principle of country of first arrival

➢ **Immediately abolish the 'Dublin principle'** that refugees must apply for asylum in their first EU country of arrival. A burden-sharing settlement system must come in its stead.

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[22] UNHCR, Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, available at http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10
[23] Open Global Rights, A global solution to a global refugee crisis, available at https://www.openglobalrights.org/global-solution-to-global-refugee-crisis/
[24] UNHCR, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016, available at http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34

3. Other provisions

➢ **Empower the European Asylum Support Office** to be the primary centre for decision-making on asylum issues across the EU and achieve EASO's transformation into a full-fledged Agency for Asylum, as proposed in 2016 by the European Commission. Additionally, the EASO should offer more trainings for asylum officers to ensure a more humane treatment of refugees.[25]

➢ **Ensure that asylum seekers' and refugees' rights are respected** and that countries uphold their obligations arising out of international treaties.
  ○ Put an end to the practice of detaining asylum seekers and refugees (on Greek islands, in Hungary, etc.) and work on an alternative solution.[26]

➢ **Continue the practice of protecting refugees for the duration of the risk**.[27] However, offer permanent residence to refugees after a certain period if they are still at risk (five to seven years) when certain criteria are met.[28] However, refugees should always be encouraged and supported to return to their home countries, if they are safe, to be part of the rebuilding efforts. Immediate permanent integration, however, is required for certain types of refugees, such as unaccompanied minors or refugees with severe trauma from, for example, a conflict situation.

➢ **Strengthen legal channels for migration.** The EU needs to strengthen its legal channels for migration through visa programmes, scholarships, and work permits to avoid readmission agreements, which will in any case only be struck if the EU provides additional development funding to source countries. EU aid could be paid in instalments, and returns could be limited to future arrivals only, so that States would not have to worry about a sudden spike in returns when people that are already in Europe are sent back to their country of origin.

➢ **Establish a long-term strategy.** The EU needs a long-term strategy to reduce incentives to migrate. In the long run, migration can only be reduced by ensuring security and economic opportunities in countries of origin. But the number of people attempting to reach Europe will continue to increase until the potential prospects of a better future in Europe due, for instance, to income differences between sub-Saharan Africa and EU Member States, will not be addressed.

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[25] The continuing failure of the Common European Asylum System, available at http://thomasspijkerboer.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/den-heijer-rijpma-spijkerboer-CMLR-def.pdf
[26] Asylum in Europe, Boundaries of liberty: Asylum and de facto detention in Europe, available at http://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/shadow-reports/boundariesliberty.pdf; Human Rights Watch, Greece: 13,000 Still Trapped on Islands, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/06/greece-13000-still-trapped-islands
[27] See more details at Migration
[28] For example: clean track record, language skills, and knowledge of key elements of the country.

V. Foreign & Neighbourhood Policy Reform

A. Vision

Volt believes that European integration is one of the biggest achievements of international politics in the 20th century. However, the ongoing destabilisation of the global order calls for a far more proactive and coherent EU foreign policy. Our vision is that of an outward-looking Europe that plays a constructive and stabilising role in the world and does not shirk responsibility but uses its political and economic weight to stand up for multilateralism, peaceful conflict resolution, and a coordinated response to global challenges such as nuclear proliferation, climate change, or economic imbalances. The EU should tell its success story of integration and achieving peace and prosperity after centuries of conflict to promote integration and diffuse tensions in other parts of the world. Europe must be an example of how former enemies can become friends and partners in a common project, and of how democracy can be organised beyond the nation-state for the benefit of citizens. The EU should encourage the replication of its success elsewhere through the promotion of regional integration across the world and support to multilateral institutions, most notably the United Nations. At the same time, the EU must recognise that some challenges, including in its own neighbourhood, cannot be solved in the short term or by the EU alone. Volt thus supports the adoptions of a two-pronged approach to increase its capacity to withstand crises it cannot solve in the foreseeable future, while working within multilateral institutions and with key partners towards a solution of these crises in the longer term.

Apart from supporting multilateral institutions, the EU should also seek to engage bilaterally with key partners around the globe. For this, the European External Action Service (EEAS) should be strengthened and EU representations around the world should be transformed into EU embassies. The EU also needs to step up its efforts to stabilise and integrate its immediate neighbourhood.

B. EU Institutional Capacity - Reform of the EEAS

➢ **Adopt a common foreign policy through a bolstered EEAS.** In the longer term, Volt calls for foreign policy – as trade policy before it – to become an exclusive EU competence. This new EU competence will be managed by a strengthened External Action Service (EEAS). EU delegations must become EU embassies, be extended wherever necessary, and replace Member States' embassies. However, Member States may retain representation to further their interests. The guiding principles of this new EEAS' work will be to uphold and promote the above-mentioned European values and interests, and support the

global implementation of development agendas, including the global Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals. Consequently, EU representation will replace member-State representations in all international fora, including through a single UN ambassador.

➢ **Strengthen the role of the European Parliament in matters of EU foreign policy**. Volt calls on the European Parliament to decide on all cases of political and economic sanctions, including trade embargoes, imposed by the EU on third countries or individuals. This would help make the EU's foreign policy more democratic, making it easier for Member States to transfer powers in this area to the European level and to make Parliament the forum for debates on Europe's role in the world, thus raising its visibility and profile.

C. EU relationships with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions

Highly connected to the rest of the world, Europe is also highly exposed to its lingering problems; Europe therefore stands to directly benefit from multilateral action in favour of increased development and a greater respect for human rights, in particular in the Least Developed Countries.

The United Nations, through its work on the peaceful resolution of disputes, humanitarian aid, development and global health, is the cornerstone of the international system. Volt shares and supports its values of peace, justice, human rights, and shared prosperity. With its near-universal membership, it is by far the most legitimate actor for global action. Yet, we are not blind to its shortcomings and the limitations triggered by its organisational set-up and financing mechanism. Volt therefore supports reform efforts that better enable the United Nations to fulfill its ambitious mandate and give it the tools to act more decisively and more efficiently. As supporters of democracy, Volt also believes that no transfer of power should take place without ensuring democratic control of those powers. Volt therefore supports increased democratic control of the UN by its Member States.

Likewise, Volt supports cooperation and multilateral action in other fora, from development and economic governance with the various "G" formats, the OECD, regional organisations, and international financial institutions, to security cooperation with the OSCE, NATO and other ad-hoc fora with like-minded countries.

1. Relationship with the United Nations

➢ **Honour and strengthen commitments to the United Nations.** As a trustworthy and rule-bound global player, the EU must uphold its financial commitments to the UN regular budget and support efforts to increase this budget. Volt calls for an increase in voluntary contributions to the UN and its

agencies, funds, and programmes, with particular attention given to increasing the share of its non-earmarked contributions. Volt encourages all UN Member States to act likewise. Volt also supports increases in in-kind contributions, as well as of support for peacekeeping missions through funding, training, and contributions in civilian and military personnel.

➢ **Take pragmatic steps for an improved Security Council in the short-term.** As long as fundamental reforms of the UNSC have not been implemented, pragmatic reforms must be pursued to make the Security Council more effective in the short term. For instance, as other countries have already proposed, Volt supports suspending the right of veto in cases of human rights violations and humanitarian emergencies. Moreover, for more transparency and accountability, Volt proposes that, whenever permanent members vote down a resolution, they be required to publicly state their reasons for doing so, underlining how their decision aligns with the purposes and principles of the Charter, in accordance to which the Security Council and its members are bound to act.[29] In cases where the Council fails to uphold international peace and security, Volt supports the General Assembly stepping in, according to its "Uniting for Peace" Resolution,[30] and ensuring that remedial action is taken. Finally, Volt calls for Security Council meetings to be more open to non-members, who should be provided an opportunity to speak on issues relevant to them, including Troop-Contributing Countries and non-governmental organisations.

➢ **Increase democratic representation through a Parliamentary Assembly.** The current General Assembly comprises government appointees representing the interests of Member States. In addition, Volt calls for the creation of a democratically-elected Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA), comprised of directly-elected representatives of citizens around the world. The UNPA's competence, rooted in the principles of subsidiarity and democracy everywhere, will be expanded over time as its democratic legitimacy increases. In the long run, Volt wishes to see the UNPA as a world parliament, adopting universally binding regulations. Volt therefore strongly supports the "Campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly".[31]

➢ **Fundamentally reform the UN Security Council.** The Security Council's structure is outdated and no longer suited to the UN's mission of maintaining international peace and security. Volt calls for strengthening the effectiveness and democratic legitimacy of the Security Council. In particular, Volt supports abolishing the status of permanent membership, together with the right of

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[29] UN Charter, Chapter V, Art. 24, para. 2, available at
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Charter_of_the_United_Nations#Article_24
[30] UN General Assembly Resolution 377, 1950, available at
http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/377(V)
[31] UNPA Campaign, Giving the World's Citizens a voice, available at https://en.unpacampaign.org/

veto, which run against the principles of equality and democracy. Conversely, Volt opposes the addition of new countries as permanent Council members, as this would only make deadlock more likely. Volt calls on EU Member States themselves to refrain from pursuing permanent membership on the UN Security Council. Instead, with the UK's departure from the EU and as long as the status of permanent membership of the Security Council has not been abandoned, Volt calls on France to cede its permanent seat in the Security Council to the European Union, along with the creation of a single EU ambassador to the UN. These reforms are crucial to revitalising the UN and doing away with gridlock and inaction; they are also essential in strengthening legitimacy and regaining popular support for the organisation. However, UNSC Resolutions legitimising military action should be carried out with broad support; Volt therefore support the introduction of a qualified majority for such a resolution, following the abolition of the veto right. Members of the UN Security Council must have equal voting rights. In order to boost democratic legitimacy and accountability, Volt supports, in the short term, the election of Council members for a renewable term by the General Assembly, and, in the long term, by a UN Parliamentary Assembly. A reformed quota system will ensure regional representation in the Council.

2. <u>Relationship with other multilateral institutions</u>

➢ **Increase support for regional and global multilateral institutions.** In line with our commitment to multilateralism, Volt encourages the Commission, through EEAS, to step up its engagement with other regional blocs, including the African Union and ASEAN, and support their strengthening. This should concern political, social, economic, security, and environmental cooperation. In order to strengthen multilateralism, Volt also calls for increased support to international institutions – including the World Trade Organisation, the International Criminal Court, and UN entities - and civil society. The European Investment Bank must scale up its activities abroad in support of the EU's external policy objectives, including to support international security, promote international cooperation, and develop and consolidate democracy, the rule of law, and human rights globally. These increased investments are a way to strengthen the EU's soft power and therefore our ability to spread our values. Taken together, these measures aim at strengthening multilateral institutions and promoting democracy at all levels, in accordance with our core values and the principles of the UN Charter.

➢ **Support global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.** The massive presence and availability of both weapons of mass destruction and small arms and light weapons, fuel conflicts worldwide, in particular in the world's poorest regions. Volt calls on the EU to step up its support to the Arms Trade Treaty and other disarmament treaties and actively contribute to their strengthening, through measures including, but not limited to, tighter controls and monitoring

of production, trade, and possession. Volt also fully supports efforts for both the non-proliferation and active disarmament of weapons of mass destruction via the strengthening of international treaties and conventions – including, but not limited to, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, and Nuclear-Free Zones – and relevant UN Resolutions. In particular, Volt underlines that non-proliferation is not an alternative to disarmament, and that nuclear States, under the NPT, have already committed to disarming. Disrupting decades of passive practice and understanding the cost and unacceptable danger of nuclear weapons, Volt calls on EU Member States themselves to lead the fulfillment of these commitments.

➢ **Invest in cross-border exchanges of youth, work placements, academics, and science with third countries.** Volt supports significant increases to EU exchange programmes and links around the world to strengthen global cooperation and mutual understanding and promote a people-centred approach to globalisation. Youth programmes, such as Erasmus+, and collaboration with third country organisations and individuals under the completion of the Horizon 2020 research framework programme must be continued, simplified and scaled up to include more participants from third countries.

➢ **Act as one on the international scene.** In line with our call for foreign policy to become a competence of the Commission and our proposal to have one EU ambassador to the United Nations, Volt calls on the EU to act as one – and, therefore, to seat as one – in all international fora. This includes economic, development, and cooperation institutions – the G7, G20, OECD, international financial institutions, etc. – as well as security organisations – including the OSCE and NATO. Furthermore, Volt supports the extension of the network of EU delegations to all countries the EU entertains diplomatic relationships with, as well as their strengthening, as an incentive for EU Member States to pool their resources in one location. Over time, Volt supports the transformation of EU delegations into EU embassies, which would replace most Member State embassies throughout the world.

D. <u>Smart Power</u>

We want to launch the concept of 'smart power'. Essentially, it is about the balancing of hard and soft power. Certainly, the EU's biggest contribution to the world scene so far has been its soft power, but its main weakness remains its lack of hard power. To avoid the historic mistakes of other superpowers, it is important that we strike a balance between hard and soft approaches to international relations. We must be vocal in supporting what is right, we must not yield to

international bullying, and certainly, we must never be warmongers or gung-ho interventionists. Peace and stability is a priority, as is the minimising of international suffering. With that in mind, we strive to retain the soft power profile that has become the EU's trademark, while consciously and strategically developing the EU's hard power capabilities.

It should also be highlighted that the EU's famed soft power is insufficient in itself as well. The EU must distil and crystallise its ability to be one foreign policy actor, with all necessary tools provided to it.

E. EU neighbourhood policy

Volt supports the principle of "more-for-more conditionality". According to this concept, Volt encourages closer ties with its neighbourhood, but conditions these ties to concrete reforms in line with the EU's standards and values: more proximity for more reforms. Volt encourages independent governance and democratisation reforms in the EU's neighbourhood, including through reduced dependence on foreign powers. In particular, Volt outlines five core elements: the **promotion of our values** (human rights, democracy, and the rule of law), **energy security**, **trade and economic growth, migration,** and **crisis and conflict management**.

As it does more broadly through its foreign policy, Volt calls on the EU to **promote its values** in neighbouring States and encourage them to pursue the democratic reforms necessary for accession to the Union. Beyond the issue of values, it is also in the EU's own interests to be surrounded by stable democracies governed by the rule of law. Human rights violations must be strongly condemned and be considered a red line for accession to the EU.

Volt seeks to **reduce the EU's dependence on non-renewable energy, in particular foreign oil and gas**; this is particularly important in relation to energy reliance towards Russia so as to protect our independence and that of our immediate neighbourhood. A core objective is the successful implementation of the European Parliament's 2008 "20/20/20" plan, which focuses on an energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables and on the creation of a single energy market – the Energy Union. This measure would prevent foreign energy providers from pitting Member States against each other for cheap prices.[32] Similarly, Volt supports neighbouring countries in reducing their dependence on foreign energy suppliers and accompany energy transition in potential future Member States and other neighbouring countries.

Trade and economic integration should be further encouraged in the neighbourhood. Volt aims at extending Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) to other parts of the Neighbourhood, as a means to bring those countries

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[32] The New Geopolitics of Natural Gas, pg 150-151, Agnia Grigas

closer to the EU's standards in terms of food quality, economic diversification, and the rule of law.

Migration is a key factor to consider. In the Southern Neighbourhood, this mainly takes the form of migration across the Mediterranean through human trafficking; in the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan, the main subject of interest here is visa liberalisation. As proposed in more detail later, Volt supports using visa liberalisation as a soft power instrument in their Neighbourhood Policy.

The many **crises and conflicts in Europe's neighbourhood** need to be treated purposefully and individually. The EU should try to act as an intermediary in conflict resolution if requested by neighbourhood countries, and, in that case, support mediation efforts between all parties involved and foster dialogue between them.

1. <u>Western Balkans integration</u>

➢ **Continue the EU accession negotiations that were already launched.** Volt supports continuing the existing efforts for access of Western Balkan countries; new candidates should be admitted as soon as appropriate. Accession should remain conditional on meeting rule of law and democratic standards. However, Volt calls for negotiations to start with the necessary judicial reforms, rather than postponing them to the end of the accession process as was the case in former negotiations.[33]

➢ **Implement measures to combat corruption.** In line with our strong stance on the rule of law and transparency, Volt supports strong penalties for corruption or soliciting bribes, as well as the introduction of digital tools for certain services to limit the possibility of bribery and corruption. Such measures must be a prerequisite for accession to the Union in order to ensure transparent and accountable governance. The Western Balkan States need to be encouraged to tackle the problems of corruption and organised crime, especially in relation to drugs and weapons trafficking.[34] Volt also supports **increased contacts and working partnerships** between Western Balkan law enforcement agencies and Member States, in order to intercept illegal traffic flows and strengthen the rule of law.

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[33] International Monetary Fund, Reforming the Judiciary: Learning from the Experience of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, available at
https://www.imf.org/~/media/Files/Publications/REO/EUR/2017/November/eur-reo-chapter-2.ashx?la=en The IMF uses the example of Romania, where emphasis was made on facilitating foreign investment and attempts to reform the judiciary were resisted. Serbia's approach to judicial reform is also considered flawed and incomplete.
[34] Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2017, available at
https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017. CIA, World Factbook: Albania and Serbia, available at
https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/al.html and
https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ri.html

➢ **Support the resolution of ongoing border disputes.** Border disputes mainly occur between the Western Balkan States themselves, while only some of them involve EU Member States, such as disputes between Croatia and Montenegro over the Prevlaka peninsula and between Croatia and Serbia over land on the Danube.[35] Volt encourages the use of mediation or arbitration mechanisms, either through EU institutions or through the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

➢ **Encourage reconciliation between ethnic groups.** Ethnic tensions remain a serious issues in the Balkans and must be resolved. Whenever possible, Volt calls for the EU to act as an intermediary to permanently diffuse tensions. Certain countries, in particular Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, continue to experience worrying tensions. These should be monitored by the EU during the accession negotiations and their peaceful solution needs to be a hard requirement for accession.

2. Eastern Partnership

➢ **Actively apply more-for-more conditionality.** Volt encourages increased cooperation for countries seeking to implement reforms in line with EU values, such as Moldova and Georgia. Accordingly, each reform bringing a positive impact should be met with more openness and support from the EU.

➢ **Resort to less-for-less conditionality.** Conversely, Volt supports limiting cooperation for countries sliding to more authoritarian rule, such as Azerbaijan or Belarus. Reforms moving away from democracy and the rule of law should be met with less openness and support from the EU. Meanwhile, Volt calls for continued support to civil society groups calling for democratisation.

➢ **Encourage Eastern Partnership countries to invest in renewable sources of energy.** Volt promotes the expansion of renewable energy sources and the diversification of providers of oil and gas, in line with the EU's environmental policy and the aim of energy independence. Building on the EU's own success in promoting renewable energy at home, Volt supports infrastructure projects for renewable energy as a part of more-for-more conditionality and a global renewable energy transition.

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[35] European Western Balkans, Serbia-BiH border demarcation: A contentious matter?, available at https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/11/03/serbia-bosnia-border-demarcation-contentious-matter/-;
Balkan Insight, Border Disputes Still Bedevil Ex-Yugoslav States, available at http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/border-disputes-still-bedevil-most-ex-yugoslav-states-07-01-2017-1

➢ **Continue the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA).** Volt supports DCFTAs with Moldova,[36] Georgia,[37] and Ukraine,[38] and their deepening whenever possible. Volt also calls for pursuing Association Agreements and trade integration with Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, should these countries be interested and meet existing requirements.

➢ **Use visa liberalisation in limited cases.** In line with the "more for more" approach, Volt supports the use of a visa liberalisation agreement as a reward for democratisation reforms.[39]

3. Southern Neighbourhood

➢ **Support preparations for DCFTAs with Southern Neighbourhood countries.** Volt supports DCFTAs with the EU's Southern Neighbourhood, should these countries first fulfil the requirements to strike an Association Agreement. In particular, Tunisia is the closest to fulfilling the requirements; as such, after continued reforms and should Tunisia so desire, Volt supports the creation of a DCFTA with this country, which could be a model for future agreements.

➢ **Continue and deepen mobility partnerships**. Likewise, Volt supports an increased mobility partnership with Tunisia, on the basis of more-for-more conditionality. Mobility partnerships with Morocco and Jordan should be viewed from the same principle.[40]

➢ **Encourage local multilateralism**. Volt encourages continued cooperation through multilateral approaches and calls for an increased role for the Union for the Mediterranean and the Southern Mediterranean Civil Society Forum.

4. Bilateral relations with Turkey

➢ **Continue the strong partnership.** Volt supports the partnership between the EU and Turkey, building on already high economic integration and strengthened political and civil society links.

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[36] Official Journal of the European Union, Association Agreement with the Republic of Moldova, available at
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830%2801%29&from=EN
[37] Official Journal of the European Union, Association Agreement with Georgia, available at
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830(02)&from=EN
[38] Official Journal of the European Union, Association Agreement with Ukraine, available at
http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2016/november/tradoc_155103.pdf
[39] Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 29:4 (2016), pp.1259-1278, Visa liberalization processes in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood: understanding policy outcomes, available at
https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2016.1233936
[40] The Economist Intelligence Unit classified Morocco as a "hybrid regime", Jordan as an "authoritarian regime" and Tunisia as a "flawed democracy." See The Economist, Democracy Index 2017, available at
http://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/Democracy_Index_2017.pdf.

➢ **Clearly voice concerns.** In line with its principles, Volt raises concerns about the human rights and political situation in Turkey, and actively supports those who stand for the rule of law, democracy, and human rights.

F. EU China Policy

1. Human Rights

Volt acknowledges that human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. They are universal because everyone is born with and possesses the same rights, regardless of where they live, their gender or race, or their religious, cultural or ethnic background.[41] Volt refutes the alleged contradiction between economic and political rights and rejects the argument that governments can limit human rights based on national sovereignty.

Therefore, Europe should:

➢ Consider the safety and the rights of its citizens abroad as a top priority and, if necessary, use diplomatic as well as economic pressure to force foreign governments to respect the legal protection EU nationals enjoy under international law.[42]
➢ Set up a targeted sanctions regime with which it can sanction human rights offenders, freeze their assets and ban them and their relations who benefit from said human rights violations from entering the EU.[43]
➢ Collaborate with the Chinese government to promote human rights that the CCP considers less controversial, including gender rights and economic rights.
➢ Provide a platform to victims of human rights abuses to speak out and support them in their pursuit of justice.
➢ In response to the situation in Hong Kong:
○ Impose restrictive measures on persons and organisations that endanger the liberties of the people of Hong Kong,
○ Work with the United Kingdom in seeking legal redress against the PRC government,

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[41] https://www.unfpa.org/resources/human-rights-principles
[42] Diplomatic pressure includes but is not limited to the expulsion of diplomats and the suspension of collaboration and/or dialogue. Economic pressure includes targeted sanctions and restricting state-owned enterprises of the respective government access to the EU market.
[43] Targets of sanctions may include individuals, businesses and governmental organisations. Inspiration can be drawn from the US Magnitsky Act, https://www.state.gov/global-magnitsky-act/

○ Refrain from extraditing individuals to Hong Kong when the request might be politically motivated or when extradition might lead to a violation of the suspect's human rights,
○ Offer Hong Kong citizens easy ways to settle down in Europe.

➢ Use its diplomatic and economic leverage to push back against any attempts by the PRC or other states to undermine the universality of human rights.

2. Climate

➢ In order to fight climate change more effectively, Volt calls on the Chinese government to peak its emissions before 2030 and achieve net climate neutrality by 2050, in line with the EU's ambition. Both sides should cooperate in these issues.
➢ Volt calls on the EU to apply a carbon tax on products imported from China and other non-EU countries.
➢ Volt supports continued and expanded cooperation with China on climate change, renewable energy, the circular economy, sustainable mobility and environmental technology.
➢ Volt calls on Europe to support environmental NGOs and activists to promote awareness and knowledge of climate change among Chinese citizens.

3. Europe

Europe should:

➢ Demand Chinese internet platforms to guarantee their European users' freedom of expression and right to privacy. Failing to do so should result in the withdrawal of the business license.[44]
➢ Make operation permissions of Chinese media corporations, cultural institutions and other United Front organizations conditional on reciprocity, meaning that European organisations, including government agencies, media and NGOs must enjoy the same operating space in China, including freedom of expression, as their Chinese counterparts in Europe.[45]

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[44] This implies (1) that message content cannot be censored when doing so conflicts with the right to freedom of expression, (2) that user information cannot be shared with foreign governments when this conflicts with the right to privacy and the GDPR, and (3) that this applies to both European citizens as well as residents, both within and outside of the borders of the EU. Inability to adhere to these requirements results in revocation of operating licenses. Right to freedom of expression can legally be limited under international law, but such limitations are conditional on a number of legal checks and balances.

[45] With respect for the freedom of expression as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights.

- ➢ To counter Chinese influence operations:[46]
  - ○ Recognise and understand the problem by carrying out studies and developing analytical capacity in government and private sector;
  - ○ Develop high-level guidance and policy on countering foreign interference, issuing statements, policy documents and funding to establish it as a priority across relevant parts of the bureaucracy;
  - ○ Raise awareness of united front work and foreign interference;
  - ○ Create an environment supportive of transparency and willingness to prosecute agents of interference;
  - ○ Protect those exposing interference;
  - ○ Engage with universities to develop responses to related issues, such as monitoring and mobilisation by Chinese government-backed student association, technology transfer, economic coercion, censorship and acts of espionage;
  - ○ Support and engage Chinese diaspora communities;
  - ○ Build expertise on China, Chinese people, the CCP and foreign interference;
  - ○ Deny visas for or expel Chinese agents of foreign interference that undermine European democracy.
- ➢ Grant the European External Action Service a wider mandate to maintain value based relations with the PRC and counteract PRC attempts to undermine EU unity, including in bilateral relations and international platforms.
- ➢ Facilitate and finance personal and cultural exchange with China on all levels, from citizens to governments, from schools to organizations.[47] In initiating and framing such a variety of contacts the EU shall ensure full representation of the whole of society in all encounters and processes. Relaxing visa restrictions will enable such exchanges.
- ➢ Volt representatives in the EU and national parliaments are encouraged to propose policy recommendations of this document with fellow parliamentarians.

4. Development Cooperation

Volt stands behind Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and believes that the SDGs should be achieved while respecting the environment, peace, justice, and gender equality.

Therefore, Volt urges Europe to:

- ➢ Encourage China to respect OECD-DAC rules and standards on good

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[46] From report 'The Party Speaks For You', https://www.aspi.org.au/report/party-speaks-you
[47] With the exception of exchange of security personnel, such as the policy and military forces.

governance, environmental protection, and individual rights, including through trilateral cooperation on development cooperation projects;

➢ Use the membership of EU member states in the AIIB to promote respect for said rules and standards in AIIB projects;[48]

➢ Initiate and participate in sustainable development projects connecting Europe and Asia, such as the Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality;

➢ Refrain from supporting the BRI as long as its projects fail to meet minimum sustainability standards on economic viability and the environment;

➢ Strengthen the European narrative and adopt a more effective approach to European diplomatic engagement in Africa and other developing partner countries, bearing the broad relationship in mind;

➢ Leverage Europe's status as the biggest source of development cooperation finance to increase international support for democratic principles.

5. Supply Chains, Trade Inequality, Technology & 5G

Volt urges Europe to:

➢ Realise a comprehensive agreement on investment with China to achieve equal market access for European businesses in China.

➢ Swiften the implementation of the international procurement instrument to prevent companies that receive foreign state subsidies from bidding on European tenders.

➢ Require all Chinese firms operating in Europe to adhere to transparency standards and accept open governance of their company and subsidiaries in Europe.

➢ As soon as possible achieve strategic autonomy from China, particularly in respect to essential goods such as medical supplies and rare earths.

➢ Diversify supply chains by creating incentives for companies to invest in markets outside of the PRC, including by exploring opportunities to conclude value based FTAs with ASEAN, India, Taiwan and other countries;

➢ Carefully monitor the activity of Chinese internet companies and ensure their respect for rights and freedoms of Europeans, including the right to privacy.

➢ Discourage the Chinese government and companies from engaging in corporate espionage, including through naming and shaming of identified cyber criminals.

➢ Prevent the export of any knowledge products to China when these could

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[48] With Germany being AIIB´s fourth biggest shareholder.

also be applied militarily.

➢ Ensure the independence of European technological infrastructure by premiering European tech and service providers over competition from China and other autocratic regimes, specifically with respect to 5G development.

6. South China Sea

Volt aligns its position on the PRC's maritime claims in the SCS with the Tribunal's decision. Specifically:

➢ The PRC cannot lawfully assert a maritime claim – including any Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claims derived from Scarborough Reef and the Spratly Islands – vis-a-vis the Philippines in areas that the Tribunal found to be in the Philippines' EEZ or on its continental shelf;

➢ As Beijing has failed to put forth a lawful, coherent maritime claim in the South China Sea, Volt rejects any PRC claim to waters beyond a 12-nautical mile territorial sea derived from islands it claims in the Spratly Islands (without prejudice to other states' sovereignty claims over such islands);

➢ The PRC has no lawful territorial or maritime claim to (or derived from) James Shoal, an entirely submerged feature only 50 nautical miles from Malaysia and some 1,000 nautical miles from China's coast;

➢ Volt calls on Europe to support Southeast Asian states in protecting their sovereign rights to offshore resources, consistent with their rights and obligations under international law. We stand with the international community in defense of freedom of the seas and respect for sovereignty and reject any push to impose "might makes right" in the South China Sea or the wider region;

➢ Europe shall demonstrate its respect for international law by conducting Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea, as much as possible with like-minded countries.

7. Taiwan

Volt recognizes the achievement of the people of Taiwan in developing and maintaining their democracy and recognises the positive impact Taiwan has on democracy in its region. Therefore, Volt:

➢ Calls on all governments involved to settle cross-Strait challenges peacefully and refrain from using force, as prohibited by the UN Charter;[49]
➢ Recognises the sovereignty of the people of Taiwan and China over, respectfully, the ROC-controlled territories and the PRC-controlled territories;[50]
➢ Calls on Europe to engage in diplomatic relations with both the PRC and Taiwan governments;[51]
➢ Supports Taiwan's participation in international organisations, including UN organisations;
➢ Calls on Europe to facilitate and finance personal and cultural exchange with Taiwan on all levels, from citizens to governments, from schools to organizations.

8. The future of China

The democratisation of China would be not only a historical achievement for the country itself, but also immensely beneficial for the world. An international community where three great powers (Europe, China and the USA) collaborate value-based to develop international justice and prosperity would mark the start of an era of peace and stability.

Therefore, Volt urges Europe to:

➢ Stimulate the Chinese government to implement domestic democratic reforms, ratify and comply to international human rights treaties;
➢ Collaborate with and support progressive movements in the PRC;[52]
➢ Support the establishment of a league of democratic nations to design democratic solutions to global challenges, including in relation to China;[53]

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[49] UN Charter article 2(4).

[50] The future status of Tibet should be determined peacefully without coercion from the PRC government.

[51] The term 'ROC-controlled territories' includes Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, Matsu and other islands currently controlled by the Taiwanese government, in accordance with international law. A tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in a case between the PRC and the Philippines about the South China Sea questioned Taiwan's claim over Itu Aba / Taiping Island due to it not being classified as an island under international law. 'China' includes mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao. The PRC government cannot afford to break diplomatic relations with Europe, as it is its largest trading partner and Sino-American relations remain fraught. There is precedent for maintaining diplomatic relations with governments that have overlapping territorial claims, including North/South Korea, West/East Germany, and North/South Vietnam.

[52] Eight minor political parties apart from the CCP are legally permitted. But they lack any independent role, as they are forced into the "United Front" (统一战线;: 統一戰線), which is controlled by the Communist Party and used to advance its interests.

[53] https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/10/g7-d10-democracy-trump-europe/

➢ Volt representatives in the EU and national parliaments are encouraged to join   the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, which is an international cross-party group of legislators working towards reform on how democratic countries approach China;[54]
➢ Volt members, particularly those with knowledge and experience of China, should continue their dialogue about China to enable Volt to suggest viable and effective European policy responses.

VI.   Security & Defence policy Reform

Security is a prerequisite of a well-functioning society. Security provides the basis for all other matters of governance and society, and sets the conditions for further development in all fields. It is a resource that the EU requires in order to guarantee safety, peace, democracy and prosperity for all Europeans. For the past seventy years, citizens of Europe have lived in peace. EU Member States have known safety and security and have been able to develop in peace.

Unfortunately, since the end of the Cold War, the European neighbourhood has known strife. The Yugoslav war raged the Balkans during the nineties. We have known social instability in the Maghreb, terrorism in the Levant and the Sahel, a war between Russia and Georgia, and, most recently, conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the ongoing occupation of Crimea. Adding to this, cyber threats are on the rise, with State-sponsored attacks from Russia, China and North Korea. Instability and threats to European security, once thought long gone, have resurfaced and the EU has not been able to respond to them, let alone resolve them.

Further afield, other sources of tensions or conflicts can also impact our way of life. About 18 percent of our natural gas and 21 percent of our crude oil pass through an unstable Middle-East, other resources cross the vulnerable straits of Hormuz and Malacca, and commercial traffic faces piracy threats in the Gulf of Guinea and around the Horn of Africa.

NATO and the United Nations have tried to face these challenges, but have only done so with limited success. Our future will be home to even more complex threats, and both organisations are unable to develop and adapt fast enough to new types of warfare or conflict. Neither can we keep counting on our American allies. Recent developments have shown that the once-considered mainstay has become uncertain.

In this challenging geopolitical environment, only one conclusion remains: the EU must be able to develop and maintain its own security and defence policy and capabilities. Other actors and organisations can be partnered with but cannot be expected to keep warranting European safety. Our security is European and requires

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[54] https://www.ipac.global/

European patronage.

A. Vision

A strong Europe must stand up for its citizens. The protection of our citizens, territory and values is one of the core tasks of the EU, and one we can only accomplish by coming together. The universally acclaimed values recognised by the UN and the international community must be defended.

In this complex geopolitical environment, it is up to our political leaders to tackle the challenges we face and ensure peace and security. These challenges do not end at national borders and therefore cannot be appropriately and fully dealt with at the national level or by national institutions. Our respective security is the security of all Europeans, and the defence of the continent is the defence of all Europeans. As such, the only level where these challenges can be adequately dealt with is at the continental level. In the short term, the EU's policy and cooperation on security and defence must be strengthened; in the medium term, the EU must achieve the integration of all its security and defence components.

Future EU defence policy must aim at protecting the EU, and its citizens, by building a common defence system that deals effectively with threats, be they near or distant. The pooling by Member States of their financial, human, logistical, and intelligence resources will be far more efficient and greatly improve safety across the EU.

Overall, we must not lose focus of the ultimate goal of security and defence, be it local, national or continental: to ensure our society and our citizens are free to strive and prosper. Currently national security policies, including military deployments and procurement strategies, focus too often on individual national interests and domestic political aims. Meanwhile, 75 percent of Europeans favour close cooperation between European armies, and 41 percent of them do not even see the need for the independent deployment of national armies.[55] We believe that the security of European citizens takes precedence over individual nations' or governments' domestic political or economic agendas.

In the end, only a united European security and defence policy can ensure permanent security while operating on the most efficient, innovative and impactful basis.

Our vision for European security and defence has three building blocks:
(1) Democratic decision-making. European capabilities go hand-in-hand with European decision-making. Matters of European security and defence must be decided at the European level, as part of the democratic and parliamentary process: no backroom deals between national governments will be allowed when it comes to

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[55] Based on a YouGov poll conducted for the Munich Security Conference. Published in the 2017 Munich Security Conference REport "More European, More Connected and More Capable", available at http://www.eventanizer.com/MSR/european-defense/

the security of European citizens. European military capabilities must be directed by a European Central Command – eventually under the responsibility of a European Ministry of Defence and under parliamentary control – following a common plan and a common military doctrine.

(2) A fully integrated defence force. Under this unique civilian command must be one European military force, for the assurance that Europe can independently respond to conventional and non-conventional threats to its territory and population. This must include expeditionary forces that will, whenever necessary, act autonomously, as part of a comprehensive security approach and across the spectrum of war. This approach also includes peaceful instruments of conflict resolution (e.g. humanitarian operations, military assistance, peace enforcement, peace building, disarmament, and statebuilding). While command structures will be unified, integrated European military forces will be disseminated across the continent and European citizens will be able to enlist irrespective of their country of origin.

(3) Create a common security culture. Events in recent years have shown cracks in classical security theories. On the one hand, 9/11 reminded us that we do not only face governmental actors. On the other hand, Russian actions in Georgia and Ukraine or the emergence of China as a major military power show that geopolitical conflicts between States have not ended, and that the world is increasingly multipolar and fragmented. Collective defence scenarios have resurfaced. We cannot prepare for a single type of military engagement, but must be ready for all types of military actions at the same time – be it to ensure our own defence, act under UN mandate, or implement the Responsibility to Protect principle.[56] Armed forces have to simultaneously prepare for expeditionary counter-insurgent interventions (such as in Afghanistan and Mali), military assistance (as in Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo), conventional wars, and large-scale cyber attacks against civilian and military targets. Rapid changes – including the withdrawal of the US from collective security and the emergence of new powers – must be closely followed. These challenges require a flexible and forward-looking European security and defence doctrine to replace the current mosaic of national policies. We require real security, not a false sense of security. In practice, security measures often make us feel safer, but limit our rights and freedom without increasing our actual safety. Volt calls for the development of a common European security policy: a system that provides a workable framework for European Defence. This includes a system of checks and balances to limit the scope of security policy in European society, while allowing to

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[56] The Responsibility to Protect is a global political commitment which was endorsed by all Member States of the United Nations at the 2005 World Summit in order to address its four key concerns to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The Responsibility to Protect is based upon the premise that sovereignty entails a responsibility to protect all populations from mass atrocity crimes and human rights violations. The principle is based on a respect for the norms and principles of international law, especially the underlying principles of law relating to sovereignty, peace and security, human rights, and armed conflict. Mandate of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, available at
http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/office-mandate.html#sarp

build European capacities to participate swiftly and impactful in global assignments, with the explicit goal of acting within existing global conventions and principles, respectfully of the rule of law and humanitarian law, and, whenever possible, as part of UN-mandated missions.

Volt supports the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and supports the global disarmament of nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction. While pursuing disarmament to the fullest extent possible through these means, Volt supports research and development in the field of defensive systems against cutting edge delivery nuclear warhead delivery systems.

As for the current European arsenal of nuclear warheads being owned by France, in the long term Volt naturally supports the Europeanisation of this arsenal once European security forces are united under a single chain of command overseen by a functioning European democracy. Until this point, France shall maintain its nuclear arsenal. Given growing concerns about the US's long term commitment to European security, the European Union must seek adequate methods of deterrence, offensive and defensive, to provide for its own security going forward.

B. Democratic Decision-Making

Military actors may only act in the name of the political, civilian, institutions to which they owe their loyalty. In return, these political institutions provide military institutions with the required means to perform their tasks and provide them with a place in society. Military and civilian institutions should always be interlinked.

➢ **Transform parliamentary oversight.** Volt wants to achieve parliamentary oversight by requiring a qualified majority in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers for standard deployments of European military forces. In case of emergency, military action by the European executive can be considered – limited in scope and time – under ex post parliamentary control, instead of prior approval; the conditions for these emergency situations must be clearly defined. In order to ensure this oversight, a full-fledged Committee on Security and Defence should be created in Parliament – building on the existing subcommittee – to ensure that the EU Parliament holds the European Defence Minister(s) accountable. The European Parliament should also decide on military spending: in the short term, a defence component should be included in the Multiannual Financial Framework, which would develop into a defence budget in the long term.

➢ **Create a European Ministry of Defence with integrated civilian command.** A true and efficient European Defence Force requires a proper command structure. Volt's vision for an integrated civilian command structure is that of a

clear hierarchy from the smallest military unit all the way up to a European Ministry of Defence, replacing the current national defence ministers.

C. Integrated European Defence Forces

➢ **Establish a European Defence Force.** The long-term goal is to have one unified European Defence Force. Currently, the EU only has incomplete headquarters, a Border Control (FRONTEX), and temporary task forces at its disposal. If the EU needs to be able to act in a multipolar world, it needs an appropriate EUROPEAN DEFENCE FORCE that can act quickly and independently from other security actors.

Volt supports moving from existing multilateral cooperation across the EU Member States to the full integration of a European Defence Force that will make European security and defence (1) more effective, by adding a credible military component to the EU's comprehensive security approach, (2) more efficient, by removing duplication in command structures and equipment, and (3) less costly, by benefiting from economies of scale in military procurement and logistics. Volt calls on willing EU Member States to move ahead with permanent structured cooperation, as set out in the Lisbon Treaty, with other Member States able to join at a later point.[57] Long-standing regional partners like the Benelux and the Baltic States can already start the unification of their military capabilities. These regional unifications will be able to showcase the benefits of a common defence infrastructure and policy, which will encourage additional EU Member States to join them. Ultimately, there will be permanent forces under a unified EU military command with permanent military headquarters.

The already existing Eurocorps, different EU Operations and Long-standing regional military cooperation like for example, those between Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and the Baltic States and theVisegrad Group Defence Cooperation show that the European Union has established basic operational readiness of a European Defence Force. Most Member States of the EU are already NATO Members, so their military Forces "speak" the same military language over all branches. In fact, there is already a very good foundation for a European Defence Force, made up of already well-cooperating EU forces that can be deployed where necessary. Just as NATO also operates with forces of ever-different members. All this needs "only" to be politically supported, enforced and deepened.

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[57] European Parliament, Implementation of the Lisbon Treaty provisions on the Common Security and Defence Policy, available at
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/573285/EPRS_BRI%282016%29573285_EN.pdf

➢ **Establish permanent Operational Headquarters.** The EU is currently carrying out different operations and has already run other operations, none of these were run by permanent headquarters. To enable faster and more Coordinated Reactions, the EU needs permanent Headquarters and Command Structures. Each time, a tailored headquarter is created. Not only does the repeated establishment and termination of headquarters result in unnecessary expenditure, but it also means a damaging loss of operational experience . It will allow for the creation of standing operational orders, instead of relying on NATO-doctrine only. It will permit the continuous collection of lessons learned and allow long-term planning. Volt embraces the idea of using already working command structures and permanent operational headquarters (OHQs). For the naval forces we propose to use the former MARCOM in Naples (where there is still a NATO command post) and for land and air forces SHAPE and SACEUR in Belgium. The staff of the EDF will then as it were sit in a room next to that of the NATO staff and, where appropriate, cooperate with that staff. In addition, the EDF can operate independently from NATO. This organizational construction is subject to evaluation. This is all the more true if there should be no more cooperation with NATO at all. This construction can be improved or changed over time if necessary.

Permanent operational headquarters (OHQ's) should be under the oversight of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and an elected representative of the EU Parliament. (similar to the North Atlantic Council).

In case of a military emergency, the OHQ must act to stop this emergency. The mandate for this is limited by the duration of the emergency and until the EU Parliament or the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy intervenes.

Finally, permanent OHQ's can serve as a link to various organizations and/or countries.

➢ **Transform the EDA into a Procurement Department.** The current work of the European Defence Agency needs to be upgraded into a Procurement Department within the European Defence Ministry. This means moving from coordination of national procurement to central procurement by the EU and from loose working groups to permanent EU staff drawn from experts currently working within Member States.

➢ **Promote common procurement across Member States with minimal exceptions.** Armed forces are driven for a large part by logistics. International common purchases of material enables cooperation, allows synergy on both a joint and international level, and allows streamlining of Combat Service Support during operations and exercises. Additionally, when different Member

States procure new material together, be it an assault rifle or a transport airplane, one single version should be bought instead of a different version for each Member State. Exceptions to this rule must be limited to a minimum, otherwise different Member States buy the same material in name, but will still not be able to efficiently support each other when deployed.

European national armies currently have 37 different types of armoured personnel carriers, 19 sorts of combat aircraft, and 12 different types of tanker aircraft. By sharing infantry vehicles, for instance, EU countries could save an estimated €600 million per year. Likewise, a shared ammunition certification system would annually save an estimated €500 million. Greater integration of European defence industries – with due regards to their potential influence on the political process, as well as the need to avoid an arms race – can also contribute to a rationalisation of costs and military expenses.

We can already start rationalising procurement of new systems. Once a European Army has been established, the EDA would function as the EU procurement agency. Exceptions must be determined at the European level only and different versions of a weapons system should only be determined by their environment of use (sea, arctic, desert, mountain, etc.) and not regional or national preferences.

➢ **Establish a Cyber Security Department**. The essential Infrastructures within Europe, such as electricity, medical, water and communications etc. , need special protection from any kind of cyber related attacks. We believe that an EU defence policy must also incorporate non-military assets and non-military/unconventional warfare. Cyber warfare is becoming increasingly effective and dangerous, as we rely more and more on digital infrastructure. Furthermore, disinformation and misinformation (particularly by Russia) has been used to sow discord and sectarianism in societies by both foreign and domestic actors. This must also be addressed in an European-wide defence force, with the ability to share best-practices between nations. Work according to the External Action Service of European Union. (CSDP). A Cyber Security Department within the European Defense Ministry will pool Europe's external Cyber security efforts. It would function as the external Corner Stone of Europe's Cyber security, working closely with internal Cyber security institutions of the police.

The legislation in the Member States needs an addition, in case of an external attack, to draft cyber security specialists to reinforce the already existing forces.

D. Common security culture

➢ **Develop a European Military Culture and Identity.** The most successful military forces were always intrinsically linked to the society they defended.

Soldiers made the greatest sacrifice in order to defend the values and morals of their country. In a world of growing unilateral action and nationalism, the EU stands for universal values of multilateralism, justice, freedom, democracy and equality. As European integration proceeds, a European Military Culture and Identity must defend these enlightened ideals. The European soldier must be rooted in a European esprit de corps – values adhered to by every soldier, regardless of rank. Wisdom, courage, discipline, a mastering of the self and a sense of justice are the values that the European soldier must promote.

➢ **Create proper European Security & Defence Academies.** In order to instill a European Military Culture and Identity within cadres, educational institutions play a vital role. Currently, the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) only provides training and education at EU level in the field of the Common Security and Defence Policy. While the aims of the ESDC are excellent and fully receive Volt's support, they do not go far enough. Each branch of the European Defence must have its own academy forming its cadres. EU military doctrine and European values must be taught to cadres from the moment they enter the military education system.
Initial and continued formation of all cadres, from the cadet to the highest-ranking EU military personnel and civil servants, on a wide range of security issues. Courses must be based on the latest research and taught by the world's most eminent experts. In particular, Volt encourages the opening of the traditional, military-centric security curriculum to insights from the broader security studies, including, but not limited to, critical security theory, in order to create reflective and responsible security actors.
Beyond the strict level of European educational institutions, national academies must immediately increase the language capacities of all military men and women in their ranks. In particular, it is essential that all European officers be able to speak to and precisely understand each other. In line with existing practice, Volt recommends that all European officers become proficient in English, so as to ensure good communications between national forces and avoid consequential misunderstandings.

➢ **Military Policy.** We emphasize that Europe should be able to respond to aggression with or without hybrid means . And, as of now, it looks like the EU is not fully prepared to take care of its own defence. (European Defence: The Challenge of Strategic Autonomy , 2019) Although we do not expect an invasion of European territory, we should anticipate that some powers might try to derive political and economic benefit at the expense of the EU. The EU must be prepared for many contingencies The EU must behave as if it were a hedgehog (to a statement by mr. Macron): Not aggressive, but able to stand up for itself.   We need well-equipped, well-trained flexible dispersed quick reaction units. This has already been partially provided for in the form of Rapid Reaction Forces and EU Battlegroups. In view of the above, the necessary infrastructure should be in place to achieve quick deployment of geographically

dispersed EU units to the scene of a potential conflict situation created by an adversary. That is why we support the Military Mobility project part of the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PeSCo). In a world of deteriorating systems and orders it is no longer possible to reach a stable peace by military means alone. The European Defence Force will react in asymmetric warfare as well as in stabilisation or defensive operations. Furthermore, will it embrace the CIMIC (Civilian Military Cooperation) idea for UN and other operations? It is important that the people of Europe have a clear understanding of the role of their military forces and a deep connection to it. Just like it is crucial that the military feels/has a strong connection to the society it is serving. Only with this mutual understanding the EDF can successfully fulfill its role of safeguarding peace and prosperity in Europe. To further this understanding all efforts should be made to expand knowledge about the role and mission of the european army in the public as well as making the military more accessible to the average citizen by for example holding open days at military bases.   Finally, a unified European Defence Force will make it possible to use diplomacy more effectively, by providing the necessary hard power to support diplomatic measures.

➢ **Formulate a White Book on European Security & Defence.** On the basis of the EU's Global Strategy (EUGS),[58] Volt calls for the formulation of a White Book, under the auspices of the EEAS, setting out the EU's shared outlook on the security environment, defining ambitions and establishing a roadmap for further integration. This White Book would also be the opportunity to outline our willingness to limit attempts at a global arms race, develop a position on autonomous lethal weapons, and recall our attachment to internationally-agreed principles and treaties, including the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 2014 Space Preservation Treaty, as well as our non-proliferation and disarmament commitments under the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

E. Relationship with other security actors

➢ **Review the EU-NATO relationship**. Since nearly all EU States are Members of NATO and the cooperation between the EDF and NATO is a given constant we believe that NATO remains a relevant alliance, not just for collective defense but also as an expression of common values that bind members across the Atlantic. At the same time, the EU cannot blindly rely on territorial defense through NATO, but must develop an independent ability to defend itself. By closely coordinating with NATO, the EU would avoid duplication and make the Alliance stronger. In the long term, as a European Defense develops further,

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[58] The EU Global Strategy was presented in June 2016 by HR/VP Federica Mogherini. Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy, available at
https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

the relationship between NATO and a reformed EU needs to be revisited. In particular, the EU must become an equal partner to the US within NATO, both in terms of means and influence within the organization. The handling of any crisis will be faster, because the European Union will speak as one. The EU will become one of the dominant geopolitical players, a trustworthy and faithful partner to NATO that is able to ensure its own security. The cooperation within NATO will continue. We should neither reinvent tried and true tactics nor establish new procedures and operational rules for their own sake that are both costly and unnecessary. Standard operational procedures such STANAG can eventually evolve into specific European rules and procedures. We can benefit from the long-standing shared NATO experience without having to reinvent the wheel, so to speak. As was the case of NATO in the beginning, it shall also be necessary for the EDF to learn how to deal with coordinating and incorporating all the forces of the various contributing Member States which have chosen to devolve part of their sovereignty to the EU in the interest of a stronger Europe. In the end of this process the EU will replace its single member countries in NATO.

- **Strengthen the EU-UN relationship.** The UN is one of the main global security actors and, despite its need for reform and more democracy, the most legitimate. Many EU missions run side-by-side with a UN mission. Additionally, the UN is able to provide frameworks and legitimacy through its General Assembly and Security Council. The noble goals of the UN are in line with the goals of the EU and a tight bond is required between the two. Volt supports increasing the EU's involvement in security matters handled by the UN, as well as strengthening the UN's capacity to act whenever necessary to limit armed conflicts and violence around the globe.
  Whenever possible, the EU must strive to secure a UN mandate for military actions. Dialogue with the Security Council and the General Assembly should always be maintained and general consensus reached.
  In line with Volt's proposals for UN reform, permanent seats by any EU Member State on the Security Council must be converted into a single EU seat. Additionally, Volt has defined desired UN reforms as part of its Foreign Affairs policy. This would allow a permanent and coherent European voice, better able to defend the interests and values of the global community.

- **Strengthen the OSCE as a forum for Europe-wide security.** Renewed conflict and tensions with Russia, such as over the annexation of Ukrainian territory, means that the EU needs an effective forum to deal with security issues in its neighbourhood. Volt calls for enhancing the role and capacities of the OSCE, both to deal with ongoing crises, as is currently the case in Ukraine, and to establish permanent dialogue on security-related matters between the EU and its OSCE partners, most notably Russia.

➢ **Strengthen military cooperation with partners worldwide.** The new European Ministry of Defense will establish multiple new relations with other security actors. These actors can be individual nations or multinational organizations. Partnerships, plans and dialogues will be established with major security actors, amongst which the EU will take a leading role. Organizations such as the Arab League and the African Union are also valuable partners, Volt understands the dire need of cooperation with our neighboring continents and organizations as a result of the Comprehensive Approach. All new cooperation and partnerships will be in line with the values and ethical code of conduct of the European Union and the United Nations, as well as with principles of international law.