Volt's Mapping of Policies

Edition 8.1

Challenge 3 - Social Equality

Table of Contents:

Challenge 3 - Social Equality

Vision

No one should be left behind. Everyone should be guaranteed equal rights and opportunities, and human rights need to be respected, applied, and upheld.

It is unacceptable that in 2018 people are still subject to discrimination because of their gender, sexuality, appearance, origin, or beliefs. It is equally intolerable that almost one in every four Europeans[1] faces poverty or social exclusion, and that support is not provided for those who are most vulnerable. Finally, some Europeans still cannot make choices when it comes to their own bodies.

Volt is tackling social equality challenges by addressing four core issues and taking a holistic approach with the aim to end all forms of discrimination, stigmas and disparities, and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Volt strives to end discrimination against women and LGBTIQ+ people as well as discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, nationality, descent, skin colour and belief. These issues will be addressed in four sectors: the law, the public sector, the workplace and the education system.

Volt works towards alleviating poverty by way of empowering individuals to become active members of society; combating homelessness, reducing youth poverty, reforming the social benefits and healthcare systems and introducing new forms of social and community housing.

Volt recognises that inclusion in society is fundamental and as such special focus is placed on seniors, people with special educational needs and disabilities as well as children in care.

Volt emphasises a person's right to their own body and their freedom to choose. Our policies therefore discuss reproductive rights, surrogacy, prostitution and ending life with dignity.

I.   End discrimination against groups and minorities

---

[1] European Commission, Europe 2020 strategy, available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."[2] **Let's make Europe equal by 2025!**

A. <u>End discrimination against women</u>

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, and one that should be rapidly achieved. In the current state of our societies, women are still treated unfairly, face more barriers than their male counterparts, are subject to specific types of violence, and are discriminated against in their private, public and professional lives. An example of this is the fact that women are heavily discriminated against in the workplace: they tend to have lower salaries, are underrepresented in senior management positions, and experience workplace bullying and harassment. Another example is that menstruating persons are restricted in their ability to participate in society and are structurally disadvantaged due to their periods : **period poverty** is a global problem.

1. <u>In the law</u>

➢ **Promote legislation and concrete action to address persistent discrimination** against women.

➢ **Work towards ending violence against women** in a comprehensive manner, including through the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating both violence against women and domestic violence (the "Istanbul Convention").[3]

2. <u>In the public sector</u>

➢ **Ensure that countries lead by example and apply inclusive and equal policies** that actively contribute towards effective and sustainable gender equality. Comprehensive strategies are needed to address the issues, with a broad range of measures, such as trainings and overcoming stereotypes. Women not only continue to be underrepresented in decision-making positions at all levels, but the rate of progression in this regard is slow.[5]
   ○ Implement comprehensive programmes to encourage women to get into politics and support them once there, through training courses, mentoring, public campaigns, and other means.

---

[2] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 1, available at: https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

[3] For the full list, see Council of Europe, Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 210, available at https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures

[5] European Commission, 2017 Report on equality between women and men in the EU, available at https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2017_report_equality_women_men_in_the_eu_en.pdf

- Educate the public about the benefits of gender parity in political decision making.[6]

➢ **Require political parties to ensure equal representation of men and women on their lists of candidates for elections.**[7] The European Commission itself has explained that "formal quotas are an effective way to accelerate the pace of progress and encourage political parties to seek the participation of women."[8]

➢ **Ensure gender parity[9] within the public sector** through various means, such as setting quotas or giving preference to female candidates during the recruitment process.[10] Such measures will be in place as long as necessary, up until the desired outcome has been achieved.

➢ **Make reporting on gender representation mandatory at all levels of government,** whether at the national, local, and regional level. This will draw attention to the lack of female representation. Public reporting can also prompt change due to possible reputational risks.

3. In the workplace

➢ **Require all mid-sized to large companies to disclose and report on gender balance and gender pay gap.** Across the EU, wage gaps between genders is still at 16.0%.[11] Greater transparency on gender pay gaps will help to tackle gender

---

[6] EIGE, Gender equality in Political Decision-making, available at http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2016.1523_mh0116064enn_pdfweb_20170511095720.pdf

[7] France introduced a compulsory 50% gender parity provision. Political parties are required to ensure the equal representation of men and women on their lists of candidates for most elections. The first major impact of the quota was in 2007, when the number of women in parliament rose to 18.5 percent (after the elections in 2017 it further grew up to 40%). See International IDEA, Gender quotas database France, available at https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/86/35. This is the case in other European Countries, whether through a strict 50% rule like in France, or looser regulations. See International IDEA, Gender quotas database, available at https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/database; Similar provisions already exist Germany, where most political parties introduced measures in their respective nomination procedures of candidates to increase the proportion of women in electoral lists. In particular gender quotas and zipping systems have proven positive effects. See Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Citizens' rights and constitutional affairs, available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/510025/IPOL_IDA(2015)510025_EN.pdf .

[8] European Commission, 2017 Report on equality between women and men in the EU, available at https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2017_report_equality_women_men_in_the_eu_en.pdf

[9] The process to achieve, and the exact definition of, gender parity can vary depending on circumstances, and requires constant monitoring to measure progress made towards the goal.

[10] Following the example of Germany, see Global Government Forum, Women Leaders Index Gender Equality Case Study. See Germany, available at https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/women-leaders-index-gender-equality-germany-case-study/

[11] Eurostats, "Gender pay gap statistics", available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap_statistics

inequality in the workplace and help to ensure representation of women at all levels throughout companies. Gender reporting increases accountability and drives action towards more inclusive and fairer policies. Volt is proposing:

- From 2020 onwards, mid-sized to large companies (more than 100 employees) will be **required to disclose how much they pay male and female staff** in terms of salaries and bonuses,[12] and by 2025 they will be obliged to obtain a government certificate demonstrating pay equality.[13] Failure to comply will result in fines.
- Businesses will have to **disclose gender balance across the company** in their annual financial statements, including the number of women in senior management positions, from the moment the legislation will come into effect.
- Every state-owned company, regardless of its size, ought to disclose its gender balance across the whole enterprise by 2020. All state-owned companies will also have to produce a report demonstrating equal pay on an annual basis.
- Sanction companies that do not extend to each individual the same benefits, salaries, opportunities for training or promotion because of their gender identity, and include reference to non-discrimination on these grounds in any vacancy announcements.

➢ **Set a 40% quota for women on the boards of all publicly traded enterprises.[14]** In 2018, the average female representation on European boards stood at 33.6[15]. This measure will not only positively impact the performance of companies, but will also lead to an increased number of women across the company as a whole.

- All companies that are publicly traded on a stock market[16] will be required to have 40% female representation on their corporate boards by 2025. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in heavy fines, suspended

---

[12] Following the example of Germany, see The Financial Times, German employers forced to reveal gender pay gap, available at https://www.ft.com/content/e9f618c0-f210-11e7-ac08-07c3086a2625

[13] Following the example of Iceland. See The Independent, Iceland makes it illegal to pay men more than women, available at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/iceland-gender-pay-gap-illegal-men-pay-more-women-income-salary-earn-a8139141.html
and Government of Iceland, Equal Pay Certification, available at
https://www.government.is/topics/human-rights-and-equality/equal-pay-certification/

[14] In 2010, the EU Commission published the 'Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015' initiative, challenging gender diversity and equality. See European Commission, Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015, available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:em0037&from=EN. The matter has recently been reopened by the current commissioner for justice and gender equality. See The Guardian, EU to push for 40% quota for women on company boards, available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/20/eu-to-push-for-40-quota-for-women-on-company-boards

[15] European Women on Boards, Ethics & Boards European Gender Diversity Index, available at https://europeanwomenonboards.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ewob_facsheet.pdf

[16] A publicly traded company, or a public company, is a company that has issued securities through an initial public offering and is traded on at least one stock exchange or the over-the-counter market. See Investopedia, Public Company, available at https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/publiccompany.asp

remuneration of board members, and/or a possible delisting from the market.

- ○ Existing companies will be given **a five-year timeframe** to achieve the quota, while newly listed companies will be required to comply with the requirement at the time of listing.[17]

➢ **State-owned companies should act as role models**. State-owned companies ought to have a 50% female representation on their corporate boards by 2025.

➢ **Incentivize He For She programmes: make men part of the solution, not the problem.** Volt believes that all parties need to participate in the conversation for a solution to evolve. For this reason, it is necessary to encourage more dialogue and to create initiatives in the workplace, consisting of men supporting good practices and sensitizing others to the issues. Those can and should take various forms: men attending women's meetings to take part in discussions, listen, and ask questions; men simply standing up every time a woman is treated in an unfair manner; or pledges consisting of men refusing to speak on a panel that has no women or participate in a meeting that women are not part off.

➢ **Require all mid-sized to large companies to have confidential channels and hotlines separate from general employee relations to report inappropriate and discriminatory behaviour, violence and/or sexual harassment.** Women still face sexual harassment and violence, as well as inappropriate behaviors in the workplace.[18] Volt will require employers to have those reporting channels in place, and have them be managed by an external company or by a separate human resources team that includes women.

➢ **Introduce measures to empower women with children to have a successful career.** The following measures will benefit all types of parents (including but not limited to single men, women, heterosexual and homosexual couples):
- ○ **Incentivize companies' internal nurseries and working modes,** enabling flexibility suited for each parent's needs.
- ○ **Enable equal paid maternity and paternity leave** for a specific period of time, and then extra time off that can be shared according to the parents' preferences. Heavily incentivize both parents to take their time off. The

---

[17] Germany can already fine companies EUR 50,000 for non compliance while Norway can delist a Company from the market. Hence, we want to learn from those best practices and have a unified system to achieve equality, by fining companies EUR 50,000, delisting, and suspending remuneration when non-compliance has been established. See The Conversation, Lessons from Norway in Getting Women onto Corporate Boards available at http://theconversation.com/lessons-from-norway-in-getting-women-onto-corporate-boards-38338; Bredin Prat, Hengeler Mueller. Slaughter and May, France and Germany available at https://www.hengeler.com/fileadmin/news/BF_Letter/14_Board-LevelGenderQuotas_2016-08.PDF

[18] People of other genders face some of those types of violence as well, and shall have access to the same channels.

length of leave can be decided according to the countries' existing frameworks, but equality shall prevail.

- o **Pilot more flexible "more-people-working-less" models.** The sharp rise in productivity has created an imbalance in the labour markets. A reduction in individual working hours would absorb much of the structural unemployment which has resulted.[19]
- o **Implement Family Working Time following parental leave** to allow both parents to transition back to work starting part-time, with possible compensation of reduced income during specific life phases (e.g. during early infancy as foreseen in the German Parental Leave Act)[20] to better balance between parents' responsibilities for family, caregiving and generating income.[21] would follow parental leave and last up to three years. Both parents would, for example, work 80% of full-time, and the loss of wages would be compensated with a digressive rate based on income level and duration.[22]

4. <u>In the education system</u>

➢ **Educate students about the advantages and the importance of having a discrimination-free society and workforce**. For example, a diverse workforce is profitable for companies as it improves both levels of productivity and employment.

➢ **Incentivize girls and women to enter careers in which they are often underrepresented**. This could be done in many ways, including by setting up state-sponsored 'summer camps' for sectors which are generally dominated by men to incentivise equal representation in younger generations. This would provide an opportunity for women to familiarise themselves with possible careers and/or studies.

➢ **Have internal biases trainings for professionals in the education system, including teachers and professors**, to ensure that girls and women have the same chances and opportunities as others, and that they are not steered towards particular careers.

---

[19] Jean-Marie Perbost, Work more? Work less? What should be done so that we can all work and perform better?, p. 48, available at https://gef.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Work_more_work_less.pdf

[20] BMFSFJ, Manuela Schwesig: Mütter und Väter wollen heute beides: Familie und Beruf, available at https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/aktuelles/reden-und-interviews/manuela-schwesig--muetter-und-vaeter-wollen-heute-beides--familie-und-beruf/75720?view=DEFAULT

[21] OECD, Be Flexible! Background brief on how workplace flexibility can help European employees to balance work and family, available at https://www.oecd.org/els/family/Be-Flexible-Backgrounder-Workplace-Flexibility.pdf

[22] FES (Ed.), Müller, Neumann, Wrolich, Familienarbeitszeit, available at http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/dialog/10335.pdf

5. **Combating period poverty**

Menstrual hygiene is not a choice or a luxury, but a necessity that should be treated accordingly in the context of society, charity and taxation. Volt is committed to **combating period poverty** and achieving greater equal opportunities through **access to free menstrual products**. Therefore, this policy focuses on enabling access to free menstrual products such as tampons and pads in public buildings.

➢ **Governments and local administrations ensure the distribution** of free menstrual products to schools and other educational institutions, prisons, hospitals, food banks, homeless shelters, women's shelters and similar facilities, as well as to public toilets. The primary aim should be to ensure free access to sanitary pads.

➢ **Handling in public spaces:** Depending on local conditions, either hygiene items are provided in all rooms or easy and generally, access is made possible. For example, in a common, protected anteroom for all genders. It is important here that "all rooms" also include male toilets and disabled-friendly toilets.

➢ **Proper education and awareness-raising** on healthy menstrual hygiene and the removal of taboos are an important part of the fight against period poverty. Everyone should have access to knowledge to develop an understanding of how to deal with periods. Also Volt is committed to educate menstruating persons by schools and doctors about possible alternatives to hygienic pads and tampons. This shall provide an opportunity for use of environmentally-friendly and healthy hygiene products.

➢ Volt supports and promotes initiatives such as the EU Ecolabel for hygiene products to increase the production and consumption of hygiene products with a lower environmental impact. *Every menstruating person should be entitled to a free menstrual cup from a gynaecologist every three years.*

B. **End discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people**

Volt is based on the principles of equality for all, equal opportunities, and the respect of human rights. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) individuals are subject to discriminatory practices, violence, harassment, and so much more in every realm of their lives. LGBTIQ+ individuals each face different challenges and have different needs; there is no one-size-fits-all policy. Volt aims to introduce regulations and concrete actions to achieve equality in law and in practice for all. By this, we don't mean an abstract concept of equality, but pure equality: we will settle for nothing less. We want to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people have access to the same rights and protections as others. It is also key to eliminate all forms of discrimination, whether

in the private or public sphere, through education, incentivize in the workplace etc. In short, love is love, and it's that simple.

1. In the law

➢ **Legalize marriage for all.** Unfortunately, in many countries in Europe some people cannot yet get married because of the gender of the person they love.[23] The fact that other types of partnerships exist and are available does not mean that this is acceptable in any way. This is why Volt will work to legalize marriage for all across Europe where it is not already the case, in order for heterosexual and homosexual couples to have access to the exact same rights, procedures, and union in the eyes of the state.[24]

➢ **Legalize adoption for same-sex couples.** So many children need families, and so many families - or individuals - want children. The only criteria that should matter is whether one can and will provide a safe and loving environment to a child. Equality means that all should have the same rights, including the right to adopt a child. No, same-sex parents are not less able to raise a child than heterosexual ones. No, a child does not need both a maternal and a paternal figure. Otherwise, how could we explain that so many children raised by single parents or by homosexual parents are like everybody else? Otherwise, how could we justify letting single parents raise children alone? For these reasons, Volt will work to:
   ○ **give the opportunity to adopt a child to every adult** - regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status - based on the same criteria as those imposed for adoption on heterosexual couples according to local law.
   ○ **ensure that the procedure will be the same as for heterosexual couples.** Homosexual couples and single parents should not have to jump through any additional hoops to be able to adopt. No discrimination should take place on the basis of a parent's gender identity, sexual orientation, or marital status.

➢ **Guarantee transgender rights**:
   ○ **Make gender affirming procedures,** such as hormone treatment, surgery and psychological support, **accessible for transgender persons**, and ensure that they are reimbursed by public health insurance schemes.[25]
   ○ **Challenge legislation that require transgender individuals to** do the following to change their gender legally: undergo medical procedures

---

[23] Marriage for same-sex couple is legal in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Malta, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

[24] It is necessary to stress that this is not an affront to religion: Volt stands for secular states; as a result is talking about civil rights and union in front of the state, and not religious ones.

[25] See for example NHS, Gender Dysphoria, available at https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/treatment/#surgery

(such legislations are still present in 23 countries in Europe, and need to be challenged rapidly),[26] or be diagnosed as mentally ill.

- ○ Ensure that people are able to use the facilities linked to one's own gender identification (e.g. bathrooms).

- ➢ **Guarantee intersex rights**:[27]
  - ○ **Prohibit medically unnecessary "sex-normalising" surgery, sterilisation and other treatments practised on intersex babies and children** without their informed consent.[28] Such treatment shall be deferred "until such time as the child is able to participate in the decision," unless when there is a risk to the life of the child.[29] As of April 2018, Malta and Portugal are the only countries in the world to ban medically unnecessary surgery on the genitals of intersex infants.
  - ○ Ensure that there are **no administrative obstacles for intersex individuals in being recognized**, getting necessary administrative papers etc. Gender markers in identity documents and birth registries should be reviewed to better protect intersex people (see point below).[30]

- ➢ **Promote legislations that allow non binary people to choose their gender on IDs, forms, and official documents** (as X or Q for example). Add the use of singular "they" instead of only "he or she" or "he/she" in documents and forms. States could also consider making the registration of one's gender optional on birth certificates and other identity documents.[31]

- ➢ **Promote and revise legislations that address persistent discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people**. While legislation is in place to tackle discrimination, it

---

[26] Amnesty International, Sexual and reproductive rights, available at https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/sexual-and-reproductive-rights/; Malta, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, Portugal and Belgium are the only European nations that allow a change of gender without medical or state intervention. See Reuters, Portugal approves law to boost transgender rights, protect intersex infants, available at https://www.reuters.com/article/portugal-lgbt-lawmaking/portugal-approves-law-to-boost-transgender-rights-protect-intersex-infants-idUSL1N1RQ0ZP
And for the general status of the issue in Europe see Heinrich Boell Stiftung, Because I would have to be Sterilized, available at https://www.boell.de/en/2018/11/26/because-i-would-have-be-sterilized

[27] "The intersex definition is a person is born with a combination of male and female biological characteristics, such as chromosomes or genitals, that can make it difficult for doctors to assign their sex as distinctly male or female." See Planned Parenthood, What is intersex, available at https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation-gender/gender-gender-identity/whats-intersex

[28] The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, PACE calls for a ban on 'sex-normalising' surgery for intersex children, available at http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=6834&lang=2&cat=8

[29] Ibid.

[30] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, The fundamental rights situation of intersex people, available at http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2015/fundamental-rights-situation-intersex-people

[31] ILGA Europe, Non-binary registrations models in Europe, available at https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/non-binary_gender_registration_models_in_europe_0.pdf

is essential to increase their visibility and revise laws where necessary.

Ensure that adequate deterrents, such as fines and criminal penalties, are in place and applied when acts of violence (hate crimes) or discrimination take place because of a person's orientation, sexuality, and/or gender. [32]

➢ **Conduct trainings for the police on hate crimes** against LGBTIQ+ people.[33]

2. In the public sector

➢ Ensure that countries lead by example and **apply inclusive and equal policies to actively contribute towards real equality**. Comprehensive strategies are needed to address the issues, with a broad range of measures that could be used to accomplish this goal.
  ○ Implement **comprehensive programmes** to encourage minorities to get into politics, and support them once there, through training courses, mentoring, public campaigns, and other means.
  ○ Educate the public about the benefits of diversity in political decision making.

➢ **Train judges, magistrates and other civil servants to recognize and address implicit biases towards minorities.** The justice system is vital to ensuring that disputes are resolved in an orderly manner and that victims are protected. Volt wants to reinstate the confidence in the justice system and ensure that biases towards minorities are maintained at a minimum, if not eliminated, through trainings and other methods.

3. In the workplace

➢ **Sanction companies** that do not extend to each individual the same benefits, salaries, opportunities for hiring, training, or promotion regardless of one's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics, and include reference to non-discrimination on these grounds in vacancy announcements.

---

[32] Following the example of France. See Connexion France, French racial discrimination fines rise up to 15 00 available at https://www.connexionfrance.com/French-news/French-racial-discrimination-fines-rise-up-to-15-000
Additionally on compliance measures for non-dircrimination laws see European Commission, A comparative analysis of non-discrimination law in Europe 2017 (p. 125), available at https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/36c9bb78-db01-11e7-a506-01aa75ed71a1

[33] As recommended by the Council of Europe. See Council of Europe, Policing Hate Crime against LGBTI persons: Training for a Professional Police Response, available at https://rm.coe.int/prems-030717-gbr-2575-hate-crimes-against-lgbti-web-a4/1680723b1d

➢ **Require all mid-sized to large companies to have confidential channels and hotlines, separate from general employee relations, to report inappropriate and discriminatory behaviour, violence and/or sexual harassment.** Volt will require employers to have reporting channels in place that are managed by an external company or by a separate human resources team.[34]

➢ **Incentivize companies to train staff** - especially managers - to raise awareness of issues faced by their LGBTIQ+ colleagues.

➢ **Provide incentives to companies to ensure that they address the specific rights of transgender[35] and intersex[36] people** at work.
   ○ Companies should adopt policies for trans inclusion, including the recognition of the gender identity of trans staff, customers, and other stakeholders, regardless of whether this is reflected in official documents (which includes establishing policies that require company staff to respect the name, pronouns, terms, and gender used by the person concerned).
   ○ Companies should ensure safe and non-discriminatory access to bathrooms and other single-sex facilities, and non-discriminatory dress codes.
   ○ Companies also need to adopt policies to respect the rights of interesex people at work, including access to personal services and changing rooms, dress codes, healthcare and medical attention.

4. **In the education system**

➢ **Cover all subjects in sexual education classes:** education is key to eliminating inequalities and unfair treatments, and to foster a culture of mutual understanding and acceptance. It is important to make sure that in a safe

---

[34] These channels will be accessible to all.

[35] "Some people feel that the sex they were assigned at birth doesn't match their gender identity, or the gender that they feel they are inside. These people are often called transgender." See Planned Parenthood, Trans and Gender Nonconforming Identities, available at https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation-gender/trans-and-gender-nonconforming-identities; "An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc." See Human Rights Campaign, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Definitions, available at https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions

[36] "The intersex definition is: Intersex people are born with some biological characteristics that are considered "female" and others that are considered "male." Being intersex is a naturally occurring variation in humans, and isn't a medical problem. It's also more common than most people realize. It's hard to know exactly how many people are intersex, but estimates suggest that about 1 in 100 people born in the U.S. is intersex." See Planned Parenthood, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Definitions, available at https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation-gender/gender-gender-identity/whats-intersex

learning environment[37] they have access to the information and resources that concern them, their classmates and the rest of the world. This is why Volt will ensure that during sexual education classes:
- ○ not only heterosexuality should be discussed, but also all other types of sexual orientations and gender identities (for example, what it means being non-binary, cisgender, transgender, intersex),
- ○ Methods of contraception and protection are explained and discussed,
- ○ All of the above is to be done without shaming, false explanations, and religious commentaries, and in a way which is non-discriminatory and inclusive.

➢ **Educate students about the advantages and the importance of having a discrimination-free society and workforce**. For example, a diverse workforce is profitable for companies as it improves both levels of productivity and employment

C. End discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, descent and skin colour

Current legal instruments at the national, European, and international level fail to protect individuals facing prejudice, unequal treatment, and social exclusion. Minorities still experience discriminatory treatment and hate crimes, including in education, employment, social services, interaction with law enforcement, etc. Discrimination based on ethnicity and skin colour remains one of the most experienced forms of inequality, with these minorities remaining the most disadvantaged and persecuted individuals in society.[38] Additionally, discrimination against Roma people is particularly problematic across Europe. Roma people represent the largest ethnic minority in Europe: it is estimated that there are 10-12 million Roma people in total, some 6 million of whom live in the EU, and most of whom hold the citizenship of an EU country.[39] Recent publications show that as many as 80% of Roma are still at risk of poverty.[40]

1. In the law

---

[37] Follow the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education set up by UNESCO. See UNESCO and SGDs, International technical guidance on sexuality education, available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002607/260770e.pdf

[38] Fighting discrimination on the ground of race and ethnic origin, available at http://equineteurope.org/2017/02/24/equinet-publishes-discussion-paper-on-fighting-discrimination-on-the-ground-of-race-and-ethnic-origin/

[39] European Commission, Roma integration in EU countries, available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/justice-and-fundamental-rights/discrimination/roma-and-eu/roma-integration-eu-countries_en

[40] European Commission, Roma inclusion: More effort needed to improve access to schooling and employment, available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2961_en.htm

➢ **Promote and revise legislation that addresses persistent discrimination against certain groups.** While legislation is in place to tackle discrimination, it is essential to increase its visibility and revise it where necessary.
  ○ Ensure that adequate deterrents, such as fines and criminal penalties, are in place and applied when acts of violence (hate crimes) or discrimination take place due to someone's ethnicity, national origin, descent, or skin colour.[41]
  ○ Immediately remove any exceptions which permit discrimination on these grounds.

➢ **Strengthen law enforcement systems in order to end police violence, harassment, and profiling, and ensure that the police fulfill their duty to protect society.** The police practice of ethnic profiling[42] still exists in most countries (e.g. in France, young men perceived as black or Arab are 20 times more likely to be stopped than the rest of the population).[43] Recent statistics show that in 2017, almost half of those who were stopped by the police believed that this was due to their immigrant or ethnic minority background.[44] Volt therefore proposes to work to:
  ○ **End ethnic profiling** during police identity checks and require officers to **issue a stop form** for every identity check, to encourage well-grounded stops and greater accountability.
  ○ **Limit officers' discretionary authority** by requiring reasonable & individualised suspicion for all checks and searches, and develop clear guidance for law enforcement officers.

➢ **End police violence** through trainings, accountability mechanisms, and monitoring.

---

[41] Following the example of France. See Connexion France, French racial discrimination fines rise up to 15 00 available at https://www.connexionfrance.com/French-news/French-racial-discrimination-fines-rise-up-to-15-000
Additionally on compliance measures for non-dircrimination laws see European Commission, A comparative analysis of non-discrimination law in Europe 2017 (p. 125), available at https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/36c9bb78-db01-11e7-a506-01aa75ed71a1

[42] Ethnic profiling consists of "the use by the police, with no objective and reasonable justification, of grounds such as race, colour, languages, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin in control, surveillance or investigation activities". See European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), 'General Policy Recommendation No 11 on Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in Policing' (p. 4), available at https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-11-on-combating-racism-and-racia/16808b5adf

[43] Human Rights Watch, France: the Human Rights Implications of the Presidential Campaign, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/29/france-human-rights-implications-presidential-campaign

[44] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey - Main results, available at http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/eumidis-ii-main-results

➢ **Remove the terms 'race', 'racism' and 'racial discrimination' in all legislations.** The current concept of different races is socially constructed, as scientifically there is only one human race (Homo sapiens).[45] The use of such terms should therefore be eliminated in law and the concept should be redefined. On this merit, policies against discrimination shall consist of the following terms: ethnicity, national origin, descent or skin colour. *N.B. Volt does not dispute the fact that "racism" - in the traditional meaning of the word - exists and needs to end, but believes that acknowledging that all humans are of one race is a key factor in ending discrimination.*

2. In the public sector

➢ **Ensure that countries lead by example and apply inclusive and equal policies** to actively contribute towards real equality. Comprehensive strategies are needed to address the issues with a broad range of measures, such as:
   ○ Implementing comprehensive programmes to encourage minorities to get into politics, and support them once there, through training courses, mentoring, public campaigns, and other means.
   ○ Educating the public about the benefits of diversity in political decision making.

➢ **Train judges, magistrates and other civil servants to recognize and address implicit biases towards minorities.** The justice system is vital to ensuring that disputes are resolved in an orderly manner and that victims are protected. Across Europe, people who are, or seem to be, from minority groups linked to their ethnicity or skin colour are still more likely to face arrest, charging, prosecution or imprisonment.[46] It is therefore essential for judges, magistrates and other civil servants to demonstrate fairness and justness when carrying out their responsibilities. Volt wants to reinstate confidence in the justice system and ensure that biases towards minorities are maintained at a minimum, if not eliminated, through trainings and other methods.

3. In the workplace

➢ **Increase ethnic and cultural diversity in companies across the continent.** Achieving greater diversity is not only the right thing to do, but is also profitable for companies: it is more likely to bring competitive advantage to a company and

---

[45] A concept or perception of something based on the collective views developed and maintained within a society or social group; a social phenomenon or convention originating within and cultivated by society or a particular social group, as opposed to existing inherently or naturally. See Oxford living dictionary, Social construct, available at https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/social_construct

[46] For example, a recent report found that in the UK, people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to be jailed for certain crimes than those who are white. See UK Ministry of Justice, Race and the criminal justice system 2016, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/race-and-the-criminal-justice-system-2016

is linked to higher financial returns.[47] Volt wants to ensure that both the private and public sectors respect and promote diversity and encourage minority workforce to enter careers in which they are underrepresented.

➢ **Motivate and encourage minority workforce to enter careers in which they are underrepresented.**

➢ **Require all mid-sized to large companies to have confidential channels and hotlines, separate from general employee relations, to report inappropriate and discriminatory and inappropriate behaviour, violence and/or harassment.** Workplace discrimination can take many forms. It occurs during recruitment and interviews and is reflected in unequal pay, unjustified dismissals and harassment.[48] Volt will require employers to have those reporting channels in place, and have them be managed by an external company or by a separate human resources teams.

➢ **Perform temporary positive discrimination** (e.g., special practices aimed at fostering equality: "supporting groups of people who face, or have faced, entrenched discrimination so they can have similar access to opportunities as others in the community")[49] to speed up economic, social and cultural integration.

4. In the education system

➢ **Incentivize and protect diversity in schools to promote better educational opportunities.** Promoting diversity in schools has several advantages, including educational benefits and the promotion of good relations between people of different backgrounds.[50] Volt wants school curricula to better incorporate diversity. For example, through cross-cultural exchange, the study of books by authors from different backgrounds and with different perspectives, with workshops, and by using more practical pedagogical tools. Additionally, provide internal erasmus opportunities within different regions of the country to diminish regional differences.

5. Specific discrimination against Roma people

---

[47] McKinsey & Company, Why Diversity Matters (p.3), available at
https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/why%20diversity%20matters/diversity%20matters.ashx
[48] Equinet, Fighting Discrimination on the Ground of Race and Ethnic Origin, available at
http://equineteurope.org/2017/02/24/equinet-publishes-discussion-paper-on-fighting-discrimination-on-the-ground-of-race-and-ethnic-origin/
[49] Australian Human Rights Commission, Positive Discrimination, available at
https://www.humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12078
[50] ATL, Race Equality and Education: A practical resource for the School Workforce, available at
https://www.atl.org.uk/Images/Race%20equality%20and%20education.pdf

➢ **Ensure that Roma people have equal rights, both in the legal system and in practice, and that no more discrimination is tolerated.** For this, ensure that they have equal access to education, housing, employment and healthcare.[51]
  ○ Ensure that during winter people cannot be evicted and advocate for a school year truce from expulsions, to enable children to stay in school.
  ○ Create awareness-raising campaigns about the Roma community to decrease stigma.
  ○ Ensure equal access of Roma children to public school, regardless of living situations. For this, eliminate administrative hurdles (such as requiring children to live in the neighborhood of the school in order to be able to register there).
  ○ Ensure that Roma people have access to basic infrastructure and human needs such as running water, electricity and heating.
  ○ Incentivise programmes at the local level to help tackle issues Roma people most commonly face, including language classes, courses and trainings to help find employment, assistance in getting the right information on entitlements and access to healthcare, etc.

D. End discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief

Every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as far as it does not restrict or violate the rights and freedoms of others. Religious discrimination is an unjustified act against an individual on the basis of their religion or belief. Such an act can be a direct form of violence or harassment, or indirect, where policies and practices place certain populations at a disadvantage. Despite a diverse European society, discrimination on these grounds still persists. For example, two in every five European Muslims experience discrimination in their workplace, housing and when accessing social services. One third claim verbal abuse.[52] Volt believes that religion is a free choice and should be respected by others. Discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief includes the absence of a religion or belief, such as atheism.

Volt also believes in a secular state, and will work to ensure that such principles are respected across Europe.

1. In the law

---

[51] These provisions are based on the European Commission's EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies which aims to close the gap between Roma and non-Roma in these four key areas. See European Commission, An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52011DC0173

[52] The Guardian, Two in five European Muslims have felt discriminated against, available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/21/two-in-five-european-muslims-have-felt-discriminated-against-survey

➢ **Promote and revise legislation that addresses persistent discrimination against certain groups**. While legislation is in place to tackle discrimination, it is essential to increase its visibility and revise it where necessary.
  ○ Ensure that adequate deterrents, such as fines and criminal penalties, are in place and applied when acts of violence (hate crimes) or discrimination take place due to someone's religious beliefs and practices.
  ○ Immediately remove any exceptions which permit discrimination on these grounds.

➢ **Strengthen law enforcement systems in order to end police violence, harassment and profiling,** and to ensure that the police fulfills its duty to protect society. Conduct trainings for the police on hate crimes against minorities.

➢ **Guarantee freedom of expression and religion**, as long as it does not prevent others from exercising and enjoying their rights, and human rights are respected. Balance national security concerns and personal freedoms, only restricting the later when strictly necessary.

2. <u>In the public sector</u>

➢ **Ensure that countries lead by example and apply inclusive and equal policies** to actively contribute towards real equality. Comprehensive strategies are needed to address the issues, with a broad range of measures, such as trainings, overcoming stereotypes, etc.
  ○ Implement comprehensive programmes to encourage minorities to get into politics, and support them once there, through training courses, mentoring, public campaigns, and other means.
  ○ Educate the public about the benefits of diversity in political decision making.

➢ **Train judges, magistrates and other civil servants to recognize and address implicit biases towards minorities**. The justice system is vital to ensure that disputes are resolved in an orderly manner and that victims are protected. Volt wants to reinstate the confidence in the justice system and ensure that biases towards minorities are maintained at a minimum, if not eliminated, through trainings and other methods.

3. <u>In the workplace</u>

➢ **Require all mid-sized to large companies to have confidential channels and hotlines,** separate from general employee relations, to report inappropriate and discriminatory behaviour, violence, and/or sexual harassment. Volt will require employers to put such reporting channels in place, and have them be managed by an external company or by a separate human resources team.

➢ **Ensure that no discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief takes place in the workplace**.

Workplace policies in both private and public sectors should not restrict religious rights. This includes the right to wear religious symbols and clothing,[53] for example the right of a woman to cover her hair, and other practices. Volt believes that no employer should have the right to tell individuals not to wear religious symbols,[54] unless necessary for health and safety reasons (hereby countering the recent Court of Justice of the European Union judgment).[55]

➢ **Guarantee freedom of expression**, including the right to practice one's religion, as long as it does not deprive others from exercising and enjoying their rights and human rights are respected.

➢ **Ensure that during application processes for employment, candidates are not discriminated against because of their religion**. This includes ensuring that job descriptions do not use discriminatory language and avoid reference to personal characteristics. During the recruitment process, individuals should not be required to disclose their religion. Mechanisms should be in place to ensure that individuals can make a complaint if discrimination occurs during the recruitment process.

4. In the education system

➢ **Ensure that public school funding is not used for religious classes or activities**, and that students from all religious (or non-religious) backgrounds can attend.

➢ **Ideally, schools should be a religion-neutral environment which allows for students and teachers to express their own religion**. **Promote learning experiences:**
  ○ In the event that schools provide civics classes in which religion is discussed, ensure that they include all (or the highest possible number of) religions, not only the dominant one. This policy does not include theological faculties in higher education.

---

[53] Examples of religious clothing are religious headscarves, face-covering veils, turbans and skull caps, while crucifixes, kara bangles, kirpans (ceremonial daggers) and certain religious jewellery can be seen as examples of religious symbols. See European Commission, Religious clothing and symbols in employment, available at
https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?action=display&doc_id=48810

[54] However, no religious symbol that could be used as a weapon should be brought to the workplace.

[55] CURIA, An internal rule of an undertaking which prohibits the visible wearing of any political, philosophical or religious sign does not constitute direct discrimination, available at
https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2017-03/cp170030en.pdf

- ○ Foster cross-cultural exchanges, with workshops and visits to religious sites, and more practical pedagogical tools.

➢ **Educate students about the advantages and the importance of having a discrimination-free society and workforce.** Teachers should present diversity as a positive element of human life.

➢ **Allow children to wear religious symbols** as long as they are doing so of their own free will.

5. <u>Special discrimination of the Jewish people (Antisemitism)</u>

➢ A clear voice against all kinds of Antisemitism, at all times, both to the outside world and within Volt. Based on the Working Definition of Antisemitism[56] from the International Holocaust Remembrence Alliance.

➢ Supporting organizations that fight against all kinds of hate (e.g. racism, ableism, homo- and transphobia), but specifically Antisemitism

➢ Fostering an active engagement in learning and teaching about the rich history of Jewish life in Europe as well as establishing a positive image of Europe as a place for people of all faiths and ethnicities

➢ Development of conceptual security measures, in cooperation with Jewish institutions and the security organs

E.g. Year-round support of security detail around Jewish institutions with special attention to high risk situations, including, cooperation with local law enforcement to coordinate security measures according to the actual threat level

➢ Fixed establishment of Antisemitism representatives, both at the European and national levels

---

[56]   https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism

An exemplary best practice for this would be the designation of such a commissioner for Germany[57]

➢ Cooperation and extensive expansion of the various reporting offices for antisemitic incidents and crimes

➢ When future European armed forces are established, extend Jewish military pastoral care, as is already the case for other religions in several armies

➢ Recognising Yiddish and Ladino as official EU minority languages, as is already the case in several EU member states (France, Sweden, Romania)

II. Alleviate Poverty

In 2017, there were 112.8 million people in the EU-28 who lived in households at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE), equivalent to 22.4 % of the entire population.[58] As the second largest economy in the world in 2019 with a cumulated GDP of more than $18.7 billion, the EU has the necessary resources to significantly reduce poverty and poverty risk in order to eventually eradicate it.[59]

A. Overall issues linked to Poverty

With almost 1 out of every 4 Europeans[60] facing poverty or social exclusion, there is a pressing need to meet the goals set out by the Europe 2020 Strategy that aims to have at least "20 million fewer people in – or at risk of – poverty/social exclusion" in the next two years.[61] The Strategy further aims to drop the number of Europeans in poverty and

---

[57] Cf. "Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Anti-Semitism", https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/ministry/commissioners/anti-semitism/anti-semitism-node.html
(2021-03-01)

[58] Eurostat, People at risk of poverty and social exclusion, available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion.

[59] International Monetary Fund: Report for Selected Countries and Subjects, available at: https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/01/weodata/weorept.aspx?sy=2019&ey=2019&scsm=1&ssd=1&sort=country&ds=.&br=1&pr1.x=48&pr1.y=12&c=998&s=NGDPD%2CPPPGDP%2CPPPPC&grp=1&a=1

[60] European Commission, Europe 2020 strategy, available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en

[61] Ibid.

at risk of poverty or social exclusion to less than 100 million by 2020 and to less than 50 million by 2030. Social benefits are essential and should be designed to help the most vulnerable; however, they do not represent a long-term solution for alleviating poverty. Therefore, the main focus of Volt's policy consists of equipping everyone with the tools they need in order to have access to equal opportunities and fully participate in society.q

1. Social benefits and healthcare

➢ **Ensure that social benefits guarantee a basic standard of life** (taking into account housing, food, clothing, healthcare, professional programmes, etc. in a given region) and cover a broad set of measures. Use social benefits as a **transitory measure** aiming to support people to get back on their feet and provide for themselves.

➢ **Introduce a monthly child benefits scheme** and send young parents a **welcome box** for their newborn child. In Finland, such a measure contributed to one of the lowest infant mortality rates in history (e.g., new parents get send a starter kit of clothes, sheets and toys, and the box of the package can even be used as a crib). The maternity package is not to be commercially available, but available solely as a benefit offered.[62]

➢ **Ensure universal coverage** and access to healthcare across Europe.[63]

2. In-work poverty

➢ **Guarantee a minimum income above absolute poverty levels.** Volt envisions universal social protection and an adequate income to become core pillars of EU policy making.[64] In-work poverty continues to be a burden for many workers throughout Europe. In 2016, 9.6% of EU citizens 18 and older who are currently employed faced in-work at risk of poverty.[65] In other words, people are not remunerated sufficiently for their work, which represents a deeply unfair situation.

➢ **Venture into unconditional income:** support large-scale experiments with unconditional basic income (UBI), to provide a solid knowledge basis to decide on the merits of this novel approach to social protection.

---

[62] Finnish maternity boxes have been available since the 1930s, and provide an equal start in life for all babies. See Kela, Maternity Package, available at http://www.kela.fi/web/en/maternitypackage.

[63] For more details see Smart State, Make high quality healthcare available for everyone

[64] For more details see Economic Renaissance, Social Policies

[65] Eurostat, In-work poverty at risk of poverty rate by age and sex, available at http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do.

B. Social and Community Housing

In the last few years, house prices have been growing faster than income in most Member States, with inequality and housing exclusion being mutually reinforcing.[66] In addition to that, the presence of online booking portals (such as Airbnb) in major cities has affected accommodation availability and provoked a rise in rental prices.[67]
At the same time, economic inequality has been growing in European societies and large share of the population experiences periods of unemployment.[68] Moreover, the flexibilisation of the job market has led to a diffuse decrease of security and social protection of workers in atypical forms of employment, with important repercussions on access to mortgage, rental contract, and affordable housing prices.[69]
Hence, ensuring access to housing with affordable renting prices undoubtedly is an urgent priority, and Volt intends to tirelessly work to realize it.

Volt believes that it's crucial to acknowledge that the housing market is different from other markets. Land is distinguished from other forms of capital because of its unique characteristics: it is fixed in quantity and does not depreciate. In fact, as the population grows it tends to appreciate.[70] It should therefore be the role of the government to make sure that citizens are protected and to endow public institutions with the task to ensure that housing policies are sufficiently elaborated, as access to a safe, secure, habitable and affordable housing is strictly interwoven with human dignity.

1. A living space for everyone

Volt wants to ensure that there are enough living spaces dedicated to social housing across Europe. Governments should guarantee that there are sufficient residential stocks dedicated to social housing, while promoting innovative forms of shared living and community-led housing. Housing policies should be tackled holistically as the right to a decent living is often entwined with other sensitive issues, such as those of the peripheries, the delicate coexistence and integration between migrants and local population, the re-urbanisation of areas at risk of abandonment and the environmental sustainability of buildings.

➢ **Ensure that there is sufficient social housing**, and that allocation is equally spread throughout the urban areas. In particular, Volt intends to:

---

[66] Housing Europe, The State of Housing in the EU, available at
http://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1323/the-state-of-housing-in-the-eu-2019. This includes the UK, the Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Ireland and Spain. The most significant exception is France, which has produced 116.000 new social housing units in 2012.
[67] CNBC, Airbnb is making rents in New York City spike as owners yank units off the market, study says, available at https://www.cnbc.com/2018/01/31/airbnb-makes-new-york-rents-increase-says-study.html
[68] Eurostat, Income inequality in the EU, available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20180426-1
[69] Eurostat, Temporary and part-time jobs on the rise in the EU, available at
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/WDN-20180813-1
[70] Ryan-Collins J., Rethinking the Economics of Land and Housing, 2017

- ○ Encourage public spending oriented at investing in the construction of new state-owned dwellings, dedicated to recipients of social welfare.
- ○ Incentivise the inclusion of private owners (both natural and legal persons)[71] into schemes that provide them the opportunity to entrust the management of their property to an association that lets it to low-income individuals for a rent price below market price. The private owner's revenue is guaranteed by the specifically instituted guarantee fund. This will ensure adequate state control against mismanagement of such properties.[72]
- ○ Re-convert abandoned urban buildings and refurbish existing structures through public spending and, in a complementary manner, through the intermediary action of private associations.[73] Volt indeed believes that the promotion of urban re-densification is a more efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly solution than urban sprawl.[74]
- ○ Promote the uniform distribution of social housing within urban areas by ensuring that the distribution of social dwellings are not concentrated in just a few neighbourhoods, but are homogeneously spread across the city center and the peripheral areas.[75] Volt also intend to promote the development of basic public services in rural and peripheral areas in order to grant a standard of living to the inhabitants.

- ➢ **Promote community-led housing (CLH)**. CLH refers to specific types of living arrangements, such as co-housing, co-living, intergenerational housing, and co-operative models and community land trusts.[76] This will be pursued by means of:

---

[71] Hoekstra, J., Social Housing in the Netherlands - The Development of the Dutch Social Housing model, 2013, available at http://resolver.tudelft.nl/uuid:049295ca-e209-4359-ba56-3d275edb22ff

[72] Best practices in this area are provided by both the Netherlands and Italy. See *Ibidem*; and Government of the Netherlands, Rented Housing, available at https://www.government.nl/topics/housing/rented-housing; see Iperbole, Ama - L'Agenzia Metropolitana per l'Affitto, available at http://www.comune.bologna.it/casa/servizi/8:3785/2896/

[73] An interesting example is provided by a private foundation (created by a pharmaceutical company) that has undertaken the task to restructure a stock of social housing in Florence. See Menarini Group Blog, Emergenza abitativa. A Firenze, 40 Case Popolare Ristrutturate da Menarini, available at:https://www.menariniblog.it/tag/progetto-ristrutturazione-case-ristrutturate

[74] Hofmann Aguirre V. H., Redensification vs Sprawl, 2008, available at http://www.isocarp.net/Data/case_studies/1215.pdf

[75] A best practice in this area are Danish housing benefits where the amount given is based on income as well as the rent, thereby allowing people with low income to access slightly more expensive apartments than their salary would suggest. See Danish House Benefits Act (Boligstøtteloven) n. 174 of 24 February 2016, available at: https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/r0710.aspx?id=177442. Also see van Heelsum A. (for EUROFOUND), Case Study on Housing in Amsterdam, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, 2007

[76] World Economic Forum, Is co-living an answer to the affordable housing crisis?, avalable at https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/05/co-living-answer-affordable-housing-crisis/; National Cooperative Law Center, The Characteristics of Housing Cooperatives, available at http://nationalcooperativelawcenter.com/what-is-a-housing-cooperative/the-characteristics-of-housing-cooperatives/

26

- ○ Valorisation of different models of CLH to help tackle housing shortage, increase affordability, sustainability and social cohesion, for more resilient and secure communities.[77]
- ○ Subsidise forms of CLH. Subsidies should be offered -both to constructors and to private buyers- for buildings designed according to defined social living standards, with the aim to ensure shared and affordable living spaces. Volt will work to ensure that repayable funding, such as low-interest loans to buy new property or to renovate an existing property, is made available. In particular, subsidies should apply also in case of change of ownership (when not connected with a change in the CLH nature of the dwelling), to support the diffusion of the model through the market.

➢ **Shared social living as a way to integrate individuals at risk of emargination**, such as lonely elderlies, or with individuals with intellectual disabilities.[78] Fiscal advantages or other subsidies shall be offered to private house owners willing to contribute to and support these initiatives.

➢ **Deploy EU funds to subsidise housing policy across Europe.** In particular, Volt will work towards:

Integrating social and shared housing into the EU Cohesion Policy by ensuring that sufficient EU funds are allocated to sustainable social and shared housing across Member States.[79] This can be reached both by integrating affordable houses and shelters in the decisions for funds allocation, and by providing forms

---

[77] CLH is increasingly being established as a viable and sustainable response to the challenges of providing affordable housing in the context of state withdrawal, spatial and social segregation, and climate change. See Cooperative City, Lessons from Community-led Housing for City-Makers Across Europe, available at https://cooperativecity.org/2017/10/01/lessons-from-community-led-housing/. As for good practices: -**co-housing** are not uncommon in the Netherlands, especially for elderly: Landelijke Vereniging Centraal Wonen, Co-Housing in the Netherlands, available at http://www.lvcw.nl/teksten/Cohousing%20in%20the%20Netherlands%20-%20as%20presentated%20at%20the%20Summit.pdf; Homify, Cohousing: De Nieuwe Vorm Van Wonen, available at https://www.homify.nl/ideabooks/793594/cohousing-de-nieuwe-vorm-van-wonen - **coliving** is already promoted in the US, -**housing cooperatives** are well established in some countries, such as Switzerland. See Current Concerns, Housing Cooperatives in Today's Switzerland, available at http://www.voltairenet.org/IMG/pdf/CC-2012_11.pdf -**intergenerational houses:** Best practice is in Germany where multigenerational houses have been receiving funding since 2006. It is also implemented with EU, federal and local funding in the form of a co-financing model. See IFA, Intergenerational House Sharing, available at https://www.ifa-fiv.org/intergenerational-house-sharing/; and European Commission, The multigenerational house model, available at https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/blog/intergenerational-learning-multigenerational-house-model

[78] There are precedents concerning individuals affected by autism: Autism Housing Network, Who Moves? Part I: The Differences Between Shared Living and Adult Foster Care, available at http://www.autismhousingnetwork.org/moves-part-differences-shared-living-adult-foster-care/; for elderly, see Elder Home Share, available at https://www.elderhomeshare.ie/

[79] Among the EU Funds that are able to intervene to support national housing policies, there are the European Social Funds, the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the European Regional Development Fund and the Fund for European Aid for the Most Deprived.

of financial support for low wage earners, including marginalised groups (i.e. migrants, Roma people, etc.) earning a low income.

➢ **Mitigate the "Airbnb effect".** In many touristic places, it is financially more attractive for house owners to rent out to tourists rather than long-term residents. This increases accommodation scarcity and adds up to the increasing prices for housing. Volt intends to regulate the use of Airbnb-kind of digital platform.[80]
  ○ Establishing limitations across Europe[81] in terms of the amount of days that a certain apartment can be rented out through such platforms.[82]
  ○ Imposing taxation on the revenue that online booking portals gain from the rental cost, regardless of the country of registration of such portals.[83]

2. Fair and efficient access to housing policies

Volt aims to ensure that low-wage earners and marginalised groups have access to the housing stock to enable a life in dignity.

➢ **Establish a Public Housing Regulatory Framework.** Volt aims to introduce a strategic Public Housing Regulatory Framework (PHRF). The PHRF shall indicate a set of principles and conditions to guide the role of the public authorities to manage the public housing policy and the public, private, and no-profit entities that manage the housing stocks. The goal is to ensure that disadvantaged groups are granted fair and efficient access to social housing. Such principles are the following:
  ○ Observation of the principles of good administration, transparency, equity and efficiency by public, private or public-private entities, at any government level;
  ○ Assigning the right to access public housing to single beneficiaries. Such right cannot be inherited by relatives of the beneficiary. Once the claimant loses the requirements to live in a public housing accommodation, the space ought to be assigned to a new claimant;
  ○ Define a share of the housing stock to be accessible only for individuals with special needs, such as disabled citizens, families in which a member is disabled (e.g. psychological trauma and disturbs, degrees of in-ability);
  ○ Enhance administrative control in order to prevent abuse (illegal possession of the accommodation, illegal inheritance of the

---

[80] The Wall Street Journal, How Airbnb Affects Home Prices and Rent, 2017, available at: https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-airbnb-affects-home-prices-and-rents-1508724361

[81] Investopedia, Top cities where Airbnb is legal or illegal, available at https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/083115/top-cities-where-airbnb-legal-or-illegal.asp

[82] For instance, this was done in Amsterdam: Engadget, Amsterdam will limit Airbnb rentals to 30 days per year, 2018, available at: https://www.engadget.com/2018/01/10/amsterdam-airbnb-rental-30-day-limit/?guccounter=1

[83] See the Italian rental law established by Decree 50/2017, 24.4.2017, available at:https://www.studiolegalemetta.com/en/italian-airbnb-tax/ .

accommodation by members of the claimant´s family, circumvention of the allocation rules and illicit circulation of the existing living spaces).

- ○ Establish criteria that regulate the yearly inflation rate of the rent, and utilities (e.g. heating, water, etc.) unless relevant and substantial improvements of the building are made. Similarly, establish criteria that regulate the frequency and amount of rent increase. In any case, increased rent and utilities prices charged to the lessee are justified when the prices are considerably lower than similar apartments (e.g. size, condition) in the same area.[84]
- ○ In case local institutions don't possess the capacity to fulfill the demands for public housing, higher government levels should be endowed with subsidiary competences.

- ➢ **Digitalise housing services,** regardless of the public or private nature of the entity or provider managing the housing stocks. Volt believes that digitalisation can provide an opportunity to enhance the accessibility of the allocation system to the recipients of the housing services, and can provide them with real-time information over the exact period of queuing, if any. This appears necessary in order to face the further urbanisation of European cities and the consequent difficulties in accessing affordable accommodations.[85]
  - ○ Volt intends to promote the adoption, by municipalities, of a digital platform system which grants the users (recipients of the housing policies) the possibility to choose among cheaper or rather more expensive solutions for public housing.[86] The system is based on accumulated points in accordance to the waiting days.
  - ○ Volt encourages the adoption of a system that does not limit the choice to a single municipality, in order to improve mobility.

---

[84] For this purpose, the Danish housing law is identified as a best practice. Danish legislation allows price increases only once a year and regulates the maximum increase to that of the publicly available net retail price. For more details, see the Danish Rent Act (Lejeloven) n. 227 of 09 March 2016, available at https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/r0710.aspx?id=173642. Note that the mentioned cap is only applicable for contracts newer than 1 July 2015. Furthermore these regulations apply generally, not only to social housing. In particular, the prices and the yearly increases are determined by Statistic Denmark, which calculate them and make them publicly available. See Statistic Denmark - DST, Net Price Index, available at https://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/priser-og-forbrug/forbrugerpriser/nettoprisindeks

[85] Morphocode, Global Trends of Urbanization, available at https://morphocode.com/global-trends-urbanisation/; United Nations, World Urbanization Prospect, available at https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Highlights.pdf

[86] See the Swedish system: OBO - Hem för dig, available at www.obo.se. According to this system, points can be withdrawn after a user signs a contract and there are different solutions for students, under 25, over 65 and disabled applicants.

C. **Homelessness**

Homelessness levels have been on the rise across Europe in recent years.[87] The EU's 2020 Poverty Target[88] and Social Investment Fund were supposed to tackle poverty and homelessness, but European governments, with the exception of Finland, have fallen behind in addressing the issue.[89]

Volt will work tirelessly to ensure that no one is left behind and to help those who are deemed the most vulnerable. Adequate social policies must be put in place to tackle homelessness and rough-sleeping in Europe. In an economically developed continent, there is no justification for people to live on the street, therefore every member of society must be given a chance to recover from hardship. Such a strategy is not only compassionate and fair, it is also a path to greater economic prosperity and social inclusion, through providing the means for homeless people to become active members of their communities. Homelessness needs to be tackled holistically; therefore, the following is not an exhaustive list, and other policies detailed throughout the document will all contribute towards its eradication, including, but not limited to: social benefits, accessible and appropriate health care, a decrease in unemployment, and reduced in-work poverty.

➢ **Invest in sustainable and affordable public housing** to bring down the cost of rent, and allocate high-quality housing for those in need.[90] Work with local governments to set targets for investment in social housing. Volt will push for a 'housing first' approach to ending homelessness, providing homeless people with social housing before other rehabilitation steps.[91]

➢ **Provide support for community-based social enterprise and rehabilitation initiatives.** To do so, work with civil society organisations to expand initiatives focusing on preventing homelessness, as well as providing solutions to help those who are already on the street. Such initiatives can focus on various projects such as providing homeless people a home and an opportunity to work, and lifelong learning through vocational and entrepreneurial programmes,

---

[87] Euronews, Homelessness on the Rise in all EU Countries - except Finland: Report, available at http://www.euronews.com/2018/03/21/homelessness-on-the-rise-in-all-eu-countries-except-finland-report

[88] Eurostat - European 2020 indicators - poverty and social exclusion, available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Europe_2020_indicators_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion

[89] FEANTSA, News: Housing First in Brno Meets Goal and is Set for Expansion, available at http://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2018/04/11/news-housing-first-in-brno-meets-goal-and-is-set-for-expansion

[90] An example of this is HomeLab. See Housing Europe, HomeLab, available at www.housingeurope.eu/section-111/homelab

[91] A best practice for this is Finland. See Housing First, Finland, available at http://housingfirsteurope.eu/countries/finland/; FEANTSA, News: Housing First in Brno Meets Goal and is Set for Expansion, available at http://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2018/04/11/news-housing-first-in-brno-meets-goal-and-is-set-for-expansion

particularly in the context of cooperative businesses that they can participate in and co-own, etc.[92]

➢ **Combat indebtedness in vulnerable households,** which can be a cause of homelessness among vulnerable groups.[93]
  ○ Restrict abusive loan sharks and invest in awareness campaigns on exploitative practices.
  ○ Invest in community-based access to finance, particularly micro-finance schemes for entrepreneurship, through community cooperatives in areas at risk.

➢ **Provide a mixture of services to meet needs related to age, gender and special needs**. Addressing the needs of specific groups of vulnerable individuals is fundamental to ensure that they feel comfortable and safe, and implement measures to prevent the prolonging of their "homelessness journeys."
  ○ Provide treatment for drug use (often a cause and/or result of homelessness) and treat addiction as a medical condition rather than a crime.[94]
  ○ Provide mental health support and social services to those who have experienced homelessness or social exclusion in order to tackle conditions that may lead to further alienation and worsening of the situation.
  ○ Increase the provision of preventative services, such as family mediation and short respite accommodation, so that in cases where homelessness can be prevented, families are supported to work through conflict
  ○ Tackle gender-based violence and related gendered causes of women's homelessness, including indebtedness and a lack of access to public services, and address underlying gendered aspects of poverty and homelessness.

➢ **Support existing European and national strategies to end homelessness and alleviate poverty.** Volt will push for an EU strategy to end homelessness, as well as national strategies in every member state, and reinforce anti-poverty

---

[92] Best practices for this are Nightstop and Emmaus. See Night Stop, UK initiative on homelessness, Home, available at www.nightstop.org.uk/; See Emmaus, international charity, What we do, available at www.emmaus.org.uk/international

[93] Housing policy and vulnerable social groups, Council of Europe, available at https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialrights/source/Publication_Housing%20policy%20vulnerable%20groups.pdf; FEANTSA, News: Housing First in Brno Meets Goal and is Set for Expansion, available at http://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2018/04/11/news-housing-first-in-brno-meets-goal-and-is-set-for-expansion

[94] A best practice in this regard is found in Portugal. See Open Society Foundation, Drug Policy in Portugal, available at https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/drug-policy-in-portugal-english-20120814.pdf
Global Commission on Drug Policy, The world drug perception problem, available at http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GCDP-Report-2017_Perceptions-ENGLISH.pdf.org

strategies. When the European Commission reviews national policies, known as the European semester,[95] it must provide a social focus aimed at ending poverty, homelessness, and exclusion.

➢ **Shorten the time period until the final asylum decision is taken,** allowing asylum seekers to work from day one, and support and provide access to vocational training.[96] Work with civil society to match persons in need with housing and public services, as seen in Utrecht's Urban Innovative Action.[97]

➢ **Encourage businesses to take on long-term unemployed and/or homeless persons** by providing tax breaks and offering government subsidies.

D. Youth

➢ **Give access to free internet to all students,** as it can help reduce poverty through growth opportunities. Access and connectivity to technology and the internet is not only a matter of economic potential or consumer protection, but a social, cultural and economic right.[98] This is why Volt wants to ensure that there are high-quality internet connections across Europe[99] in terms of the fastest available mobile network connections and wifi, including in rural areas and marginalised communities, as soon as possible. The economic benefits of widespread connectivity should be encouraged, while provisions must be equitable, fair and universal as a merit or public good.

➢ **Provide youth and students free access to participation and enjoyment of culture** by showing their national ID or any other official document that indicates their age and/or confirms student status.[100] This includes free entry to museums, monuments, concerts, art exhibitions, music lessons, municipal theaters and cinemas.

---

[95] European Commission, The European Semester, available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en

[96] For more details see Asylum seekers and refugees

[97] Urban Innovative Actions, Utrecht, available at http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/city/utrecht

[98] For more details see Smart State, Guarantee Digital Right and Freedom

[99] European Commission, Connectivity for a European Gigabite Society, available at https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/improving-connectivity-and-access

[100] Everyone has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. This includes the right of individuals and communities to know, understand, visit, make use of, maintain, exchange, and develop cultural heritage and cultural expressions, as well as to benefit from the cultural heritage and cultural expressions of others. It also includes the right to participate in the identification, interpretation, and development of cultural heritage, as well as in the design and implementation of safeguarding policies and programme. See UNESCO, The right to culture, available at
http://www.unesco.org/culture/culture-sector-knowledge-management-tools/10_Info%20Sheet_Right%20to%20Culture.pdf

➢ **Reform the European Youth Card to offer reduced prices for public and private transportation** (intercity and urban) all over the European Union in order to promote travelling, as a positive initiative that develops a pan-European identity. This card should be available for free to all young people (0-30 years old) who can prove that they face poverty around Europe. Make public transportation free for youth in vocational training and general education, and who are job-seeking.

➢ **Provide young people with free access to the healthcare system**.[101] Universal access to high-quality and affordable healthcare is a basic right for everyone in Europe. Volt will set European standards for fast access to specialised healthcare and standardize preventive health care programmes for children.

➢ **Equalize the minimum wage for all workers above the age of 18** in order to stop the age gap of salaries. This is to discontinue the practice in some European countries in which young people (18-25 years old) are legally paid less than those above 25 years old.[102]

➢ **Ensure minimum child benefits all over Europe** and harmonize them to minimum standards in the EU. Universal child benefits substantially reduce child poverty. Efficient family policies, such as providing adequate child benefits, lead to better chances to secure a sustainable work-life balance and to protect children from social exclusion.[103]

1. **Education**

➢ **Provide free and daily school meals** to all students to break the cycle of hunger and child poverty. Access to free meals has nutritional and health benefits[104] and supports productivity and educational success.

➢ **Improve the quality and accessibility of childcare services** and promote early learning programmes for children to ensure early education services and

---

[101] For more details see Smart State, Make high quality healthcare available for everyone, Provide preventive healthcare programmes for minors

[102] A wage gap still exists in some European countries, including Greece, The Netherlands, the UK, Kosovo, Andora, and Belgium. See FeDEE, Minimum Wage Rates, available at https://www.fedee.com/pay-job-evaluation/minimum-wage-rates/

[103] For more details, see Economic Renaissance, Shape the future of work and tackle (youth) unemployment with innovative concepts

[104] For more information, see Sustain, Free school meals for all, available at https://www.sustainweb.org/childrensfoodcampaign/free_school_meals/

enhance children's learning skills.[105] These should be available to all children under 6 years of age for free.

➢ **Encourage skill-training** (eg. woodworking, culinary, sewing, foreign languages, rhetoric, business management) while at school, aiming to develop skills that enhance human capital and lead to long-term gains in employment and standard of living.[106]

➢ **Ensure that students have access to career guidance.** Such guidance will include opportunities available for students, including higher education and career options. Counselling will also provide an opportunity to learn about the job market.

➢ **Perform temporary positive discrimination to speed up economic, social, and cultural integration** (i.e., special practices aimed at fostering equality: "supporting groups of people who face, or have faced, entrenched discrimination so they can have similar access to opportunities as others in the community.")[107] Include special tracks and exams that reward merit among students from disadvantaged backgrounds to increase their access to good schools and universities.

➢ **Ensure the necessary funding goes through all levels of education** (including tertiary and vocational education), including through low or no-interest loans for students and/or their families, subsidized by governments.

➢ **Reduce the stigma attached to homelessness** through educational policies and by running awareness raising campaigns particularly targeted at youth.

III. Include everyone in society

A. Seniors

1. Intergenerational engagement

➢ **Introduce intergenerational/multigenerational houses** to revive the idea of interaction and mutual support between young and old. The subsidy programme

---

[105] Early learning is a term that is used to describe programmes that provide education for children outside their own home before kindergarten. See Early Learning Coalition for Osceola County, What is Early Learning?, available at
http://elcosceola.org/for-families/what-is-early-learning/

[106] What Works in Youth Employment, Skills Training programmes, available at
http://www.wwinye.org/by-theme/skills-training/more-on-skills-training

[107] Positive Actions to achieve equality, Human Rights Commission, available at
https://www.hrc.co.nz/enquiries-and-complaints/faqs/positive-actions-achieve-equality/

for multigenerational living, run by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens and Youth (BMFSFJ), is a model that other countries should investigate. It is implemented with EU, federal, and local funding in the form of a co-financing modeMoreoverl.[108]

➢ **Introduce state-sponsored mentoring programmes that connect retirees with young people.** Such intergenerational programmes are beneficial for both parties[109]. Young people gain attention and mentoring they often lack. Therewith, it could be part of the solution to tackle expensive childcare systems. Seniors benefit from learning new skills (e.g. technology), having company and a sense of purpose, which further tackles loneliness of seniors.[110]

2. Infrastructures

➢ **Ensure the capillarity of services for seniors**, including in remote locations and rural areas. This could, for example, help elderly people who wish to remain in their homes, but live outside centres of high service density.

➢ **Support programmes and centres for the elderly** by providing seniors with geriatric healthcare services and supporting them in activities such as trips, lifelong learning, and other programmes as such. Ensure that seniors have access to goods and services, including the web. Volt will work to increase the focus on digital technological literacy education for all ages.

➢ **Ensure transport is accessible and affordable for seniors.**
   ○ Ensure that seniors can travel at a reduced cost on local public transportation.
   ○ Provide discounts and concessions on train tickets. This would also apply for privately-owned train companies.
   ○ Adapt public transportation so that seniors who are less mobile can freely use it. This includes requiring public transportation (e.g. buses, trams) to have wheelchair lifts and requiring every train to have at least one wheelchair-accessible railcar.

3. Work

---

[108] European Commission: Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe, The multigenerational house model, available at https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/blog/intergenerational-learning-multigenerational-house-model;

[109] Stanford, Older people offer resources that children need, Stanford report says, available at https://news.stanford.edu/2016/09/08/older-people-offer-resource-children-need-stanford-report-says/

[110] Mmlearn, Improving Quality of Life for Seniors through Intergenerational Mentoring, available at http://training.mmlearn.org/blog/improving-quality-of-life-for-seniors-through-intergenerational-mentoring

➢ **Provide incentives for individuals to continue to be engaged at work**, in accordance with their ability and skills.

➢ **Fight discrimination based on age** in everyday life, in the workplace, and in seeking employment.[111]

➢ **Encourage lifelong learning to enable people to adapt to changes in the labour market and in society**.[112] Volt supports a strategy to move 'From an Unemployment to an Employment Insurance,' with a reorientation towards a preventive scheme focused on maintaining employability,[113] including for the elderly.

B. <u>People with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)</u>

People with SEND shall be treated with decency, and shall always have access to (basic) services. They should have access to equal opportunities in society. People with SEND are people first, with their own lives, ambitions, and hopes.

1. <u>Education</u>

Education should aim to promote the academic, practical, social and emotional learning of all learners. Disabled children and children with special educational needs are entitled to an education that pushes them to reach their full potential.[114]

➢ **Ensure that educator qualifications include special educational needs and disability training** and, where practical, placement experience in a setting caring for children with additional needs.[115]
  ○ Ensure educational institutions approach teaching as a learning activity, where teachers take responsibility for their lifelong learning.[116]
  ○ Promote learner difference as an asset to education.[117]

---

[111]The European Union has since 2000 a <u>directive</u> banning – among others – discrimination on the basis of age in employment and occupation. See https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/age-discrimination_en

[112] Promoting lifelong learning for older workers, available at https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3045_en.pdf

[113] For more details see Economic Renaissance, Shape the future of work and tackle (youth) unemployment with innovative concepts

[114] Council for disabled children, Education & Learning, available at https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/our-work/education-learning

[115] European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Five Key Messages for Inclusive Education: Putting theory into practice, available at https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/Five%20Key%20Messages%20for%20Inclusive%20Education.pdf

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

○ Promote anti-bullying campaigns to promote inclusion and understanding.[118]

➢ **Create and enforce an inclusion requirement for educational facilities**, which will consist of producing information on admissions policies and making reasonable adjustments to admit children with additional needs. This requirement should be supported by clear arrangements with local authorities to provide the necessary support.

➢ **Ensure that families of children with SEND have access to affordable, suitable, and high-quality childcare**.[119] In order to do this:
○ Identify where financial support must be improved to meet the extra costs of childcare for disabled children and remove barriers to access.
○ Introduce a requirement for local authorities to publish clear information on access to childcare, including support for parents and providers.
○ Ensure inclusivity is supported in mainstream schools so that children with SEND can be part of one inclusive system. This excludes cases where children would benefit more from specialised institutions.

➢ **Ensure data (including statistical and research data) is collected in a holistic manner** to enable states to formulate appropriate policies, while complying with legal safeguards and international norms to protect human rights in the collection and use of statistics.

2. Health and Wellbeing

➢ **Destigmatize mental health** by:
○ Easing access to mental health care.
○ Openly discussing mental illness in education and at work.
○ Incentivizing schools and companies to provide mental health support.

➢ **Ensure that people with SEND, their next of kin and carers explore and understand their rights** and how to navigate the healthcare system.[120] This

---

[118] An example of this is the "All Together School" initiative, which has proven to reduce bullying of all children. The All Together programme builds upon the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance's previous SEND anti-bullying champion programme which saw significant positive results. Participating schools are supported on- and offline to make whole-school changes to anti-bullying practices. See Anti-bullying Alliance, The All Together Anti-Bullying programme for Schools, available at http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/aba-our-work/our-programmes/all-together-anti-bullying-programme-schools

[119] In 2014, Every Disabled Child Matters launched a new campaign called Levelling the Playing Field following an independent parliamentary inquiry into childcare for disabled children and those with Special Educational Needs. See Council for Disabled Children, Leveling the Playing Field: One Year Update, available at https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/levelling-playing-field-one-year-update

[120] The Get Your Rights project helps children and young people explore their rights and become more confident when using the NHS, by explaining what the rights in the NHS Constitution mean for them

could include face-to-face training, online modules and online resources. Provide criteria for quality (a set of non-mandatory standards to delivering health services) so that healthcare providers can assess how their provisions meet the needs and preferences of people with SEND.[121]

➢ **Draft and enforce minimum standards for psychiatric hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and other hospitals** with longer-term patients, which should include but not be limited to:
   ○ Providing support to people with SEND.[122]
   ○ Systematically involving people with SEND in planning and managing their own healthcare, when possible.
   ○ Ensuring health professionals have training on how to communicate with people with learning difficulties and communication impairments.[123]

3. Into Adulthood

➢ **Ensure services facilitate the successful transition of young people with complex health needs from childhood to adulthood.**[124] Transitional care should be commissioned collaboratively by child and adult services.[125]

➢ **Support mid-sized to large companies to make work experience schemes fully inclusive,** so that people with special education needs and disabilities have opportunities to join the workforce and are supported to take up these opportunities.

---

through a website, workshop resources, and research papers. See Get Your Rights, Everything you need to get the most out of the NHS, available at http://www.getyourrights.org/

[121] Based on 'You're Welcome - Quality Criteria for Young People Friendly Health Service' policy paper. See Gov.uk, Quality criteria for young people friendly health services, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quality-criteria-for-young-people-friendly-health-services

[122] The Special Educational Consortium (SEC) campaigned for young people in custody to receive support while they are detained. See Council for Disabled Children, Our work, available at https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/special-educational-consortium/our-work.

[123] A best practice in this regard is the "Managing My Way" project. See Council for Disabled Children, Managing my Way, available at https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/managing-my-way-report

[124] Transition is the "purposeful, planned process that addresses the medical, psychosocial, educational and vocational needs of adolescents and young adults with chronic medical and physical conditions as they move from child-centred to adult oriented healthcare systems." See Blum RW, Garell D, Hodgman CH, et al. Transition from child-centred to adult health-care systems for adolescents with chronic conditions. A position paper of the Society for Adolescent Medicine. 14:570–6, available at https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/1054139X9390143D

[125] Following the example of Transition Information Network submitted to UK's Department of Health. See Transition Information Network, Implications for the Department of Health, available at https://research.ncl.ac.uk/media/sites/researchwebsites/transitionprogramme/Implications%20for%20Department%20of%20Health.docx

4. Participation

➢ **Ensure the accessibility of public transportation** everywhere and support a barrier-free transport (e.g., barrier free underground/ metro services, regular transportation in rural areas, etc). People with SEND should be involved in planning decisions about local and accessible public transport, so that transport issues do not become a barrier to people's participation.

➢ **Set minimum quotas across the private and public sector** (mid-sized to large companies) to ensure that people with SEND are given the chance to work. If quotas are not met, companies should provide and contribute to vocational programmes to integrate people with disabilities. Give benefits to companies that employ people with disabilities and tax breaks to companies focusing on technological innovation for those in need.

➢ **Promote the supported employment model**, which is an individualised model to ensure people with SEND secure and retain employment. Using a collaborative strategy, the model allows people with SEND to sustain employment and businesses to employ valuable workers.[126]

➢ **Ensure that people with SEND are included in political decision-making processes.** Provide clear guidance on how to involve people with SEND in strategic decision making, which should include indicators to measure the performance of the development of inclusive participation opportunities.[127]

5. Social Care

➢ **Establish a new statutory right to a period of 'adjustment leave'** to enable parents to cope with the onset of a disability in a child and put care arrangements in place.

Provide support to families from the time of diagnosis that their child has a learning disability.[128] This could include a key worker to support the family, and

---

[126] European Union of Supported Employment, European Union of Supported Employment Toolkit, available at http://www.euse.org/content/supported-employment-toolkit/EUSE-Toolkit-2010.pdf

[127] This is based off the VIPER recommendations. VIPER is a three-year project which started in summer 2010, and set out to explore disabled children and young people's participation in decision making about services. See Council for disabled children, VIPER, available at https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/our-work/participation/policy/research-young-peoples-participation-local-decisions-viper

[128] The Foundation for People With Learning Disabilities' First Impressions research project (Davies, J., (2005) First Impressions London: The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities) emphasised the shortcomings in how professionals share the new's child's disability. Nearly 50% of participants in the study reported a poor experience. If there is good information and emotional and practical support, this will impact positively on the future of people with learning disabilities and their families.

it is particularly important if the parent/carer has SEND needs themselves.

6. Holistic approach

➢ **Provide guidance and funding** to ensure provisions such as leisure centres, after school clubs and holiday play schemes can accommodate people with special educational needs and disabilities. This includes training staff, ensure buildings are accessible, and activities are differentiated.

➢ **Ensure co-ordination and co-operation among services** (such as social care services, education, hospitals, transportation etc) to ensure a holistic approach and good communication between the key stakeholders.

C. Child in care

Every child deserves a home and an opportunity to live a happy life. Institutions, or orphanages, across Europe are proving to be insufficient to accommodate and address the needs of children who were placed under the care of the state.[129] Deinstitutionalisation is a process of replacing institutional care for children with care in a family or family-like environment. The main focus should therefore be placed on supporting adoption policies and reforming the current institutional system. Poverty and social exclusion among families is a driving force of children's institutionalisation - many children placed in orphanages have parents - therefore our children's care policy goes hand in hand with our policy on the alleviation of poverty.

➢ **Give the opportunity to adopt a child to every adult** - regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status - based on the same criteria as those imposed on heterosexual couples, according to local law.

➢ **Enable children to have more than two legal parents** if it is in the best interest of the child.[130] Typical examples of this include a child raised by both their biological parents and by a third person who equally cares for the child, who could be a step-parent or a person who is also considered by the child to be a parent.

---

[129] Opening Doors for Europe's Children, Institutional Care in Europe, available at
http://www.openingdoors.eu/institutional-care-in-europe/

[130] A best practice example is California. See SB-274 Family law: parentage: child custody and support, available at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB274. To understand better the issues linked to this subject, see Youtube, Should three-parent families be legally recognised? See The Economist, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlBtgXO3taw; Boston.com, Courts and 'tri-parenting': A state-by-state look, available at https://www.boston.com/news/national-news/2017/06/18/courts-and-tri-parenting-a-state-by-state-look

➢ **Reform existing institutional care systems** to improve the quality of care, including re-training and training staff, supporting independent living skills and personalised transition plans, and strengthening existing services.[131] Increase public spending to strengthen such institutions and ensure they are of the highest quality.

➢ **Transition from institutional care to family and community care** (deinstitutionalisation), with a focus on the integration of children into communities and wider society to avoid segregation and social exclusion.[132]

IV. <u>Own your body</u>

A. <u>Sex Work</u>

Legalize sex work, while heavily regulating the profession.

➢ **Legalise sex work,** and ensure that safe working places exist; such as brothels.[133]

➢ **Ensure that sex workers get insurance, healthcare and other standard protections.[134]**

➢ **Address violence**, trafficking, and ensure access to legal services

B. <u>Ending life with dignity</u>

Ending life is a profound existential process that cannot be reduced to a mere medical procedure.

---

[131] Opening Doors for Europe's Children, Poverty remains a Europe-wide cause of children's institutionalisation, campaign's latest fact sheets reveal, available at http://www.openingdoors.eu/opening-doors-for-europes-children-releases-latest-fact-sheets-from-15-countries/

[132] Receiving community-based services provides an opportunity to have adequate individual support that institutional care often cannot provide, and as a consequence, a good quality of life and the right to independent living. See European Commision, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, available at http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1246&furtherNews=yes&langId=en&newsId=9056

[133] Holland's legal prostitution zones reduce rape: https://journalistsresource.org/studies/government/criminal-justice/legal-prostitution-reduce-rape-holland/

[134] The UN provides warning and best practices to ensure a better healthcare system for prostitutes: https://www.who.int/hiv/topics/vct/sw_toolkit/general_conclusion_recommendations_english.pdf

Volt believes that every person has the right to determine how to end their life with dignity, as long as no other person's life is harmed. A wide range of support should be available and accessible for those people seeking help, in addition to medical attention, e.g. palliative medicine to alleviate pain, hospices to offer psychological or spiritual support, or flexible work-time to allow family members to care for dying relatives. In particularly grave situations of "constant and unbearable physical or mental suffering that cannot be alleviated,"[135] a person may seek assistance to terminate their life, and deserves to be supported to do so with dignity.

We distinguish three forms of terminating life upon request:

- **Passive Euthanasia**: Passive euthanasia occurs when the person dies because the medical professionals either don't do something necessary to keep the person alive, or when they stop doing something that is keeping the person alive, such as switch off life-support machines, disconnect a feeding tube, don't carry out a life-extending operation, or don't give life-extending drugs.[136]
- **Assisted Suicide**: A person makes the request out of their free will, not coerced or pressured by other persons, and with full conviction, to take their life, and seeks professional (typically doctor's) assistance. Before undertaking Assisted Suicide, the person should first be given the opportunity to explore other life and death options available. To the very end, the person stays in full control of the process and is solely responsible for their death. The physician's role is to supply, but not to administer, the lethal drug.
- **Active Euthanasia**: Active euthanasia occurs, when a doctor, or another person, intentionally administers a fatal dose of a medication to cause the patient's death at the patient's request and with full, informed consent.[137] The main difference to assisted suicide is, that active euthanasia is entirely physician-mediated, including administration of the lethal dose, whereas persons committing assisted suicide administer the lethal dose to themselves.

Volt stands for the following policies:

➢ **Legalize   passive   euthanasia**.

   Also legalize living wills to guide decision on passive euthanasia for people who wish passive euthanasia to be performed if they ever find themselves in a particular situation which they now regard as unbearable and offering no

---

[135] The Belgian Act on Euthanasia of May, 28th 2002, available at http://www.ethical-perspectives.be/viewpic.php?TABLE=EP&ID=59

[136] BBC, Ethics Guide, Active and Passive Euthanasia, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/euthanasia/overview/activepassive_1.shtml

[137] Michael Manning, Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide: Killing or Caring?, 1998, p.3, available at https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=t1THVkQPbfsC&printsec=copyright&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

prospect of improvement (e.g. dementia) and in which the person is incapacitated to make a decision her/himself.[138]

➢ **Legalize assisted suicide for competent adult who suffer from** "constant and unbearable physical or mental suffering that cannot be alleviated". Ensure that the following criteria are met before allowing assisted suicide:
  ○ The person is a competent adult who suffers from "constant and unbearable physical or mental suffering that cannot be alleviated".
  ○ The person undergoes an ex-ante evaluation with at least two independent doctors and one psychiatrist, that need to confirm the person is a competent adult who suffers from "constant and unbearable physical or mental suffering that cannot be alleviated," and that the person is making the request out of their own free will, not coerced or pressured by other persons.
  ○ The person's request must be made earnestly and with full conviction, as determined during the ex-ante evaluation.
  ○ If the person is a minor, only allow assisted suicide in exceptional circumstances, with the consent of parents if they are younger than 16 years, and with the parents at least informed, if they are under 18, and a confirmation by at least two independent doctors and one psychiatrist that the minor is competent to take such a decision.
➢ Ensure that during the procedure,
  ○ the person stays in full control of the process. Indeed, the physician's role is to supply, but not to administer, the lethal drug.
  ○ family and friends are allowed to be present if the patient chooses so.
➢ Put in place an ex post committee to review all cases of assisted suicide, comprised of at least a medical expert, an ethicist and a legal expert. Every instance of assisted suicide must be reported.
➢ Make publicly available information of doctors willing to assist. Ensure that no doctor is forced to take part in such procedure.

➢ **Strictly oppose active euthanasia, with one exception**:
  ○ Allow active euthanasia only when a person fulfills all the conditions for assisted suicide (see provisions above) but is **physically handicapped** in such a way that makes it impossible for the person to administer the legal dose themself. Ensure that the doctor's intervention is as limited as Possible.
  ○ **Volt opposes the legalization of active euthanasia**, as it is a highly controversial issue that raises ethical and legal issues, in particular the fact that another party performs the act of taking the life of a person.

---

[138] In fact, a living will need not block treatment, but could also specify that doctors must continue treatment until the patient is dead, regardless of pain or suffering. See BBC, Ethics Guide, Living wills, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/euthanasia/overview/livingwills.shtml

C. __Reproductive rights__

The right to health includes women's sexual and reproductive rights, which States have an obligation to respect, protect and guarantee. Women are entitled to reproductive health care services, goods, and facilities that are (a) available in adequate amounts; (b) accessible physically and economically; (c) accessible without discrimination; and (d) of good quality.[139]

Access to health services is a human right. However, women are often either denied this right or have limited access to it, especially when it comes to abortion or contraception.

1. __Abortion__

➢ __Make abortion accessible in the law and practice, and free__ for all women at least until the end of the first trimester.[140]
   ○ Ensure that abortions are not only legal, but also accessible. This means that health centers and hospitals should offer the procedures across regions, and that there are no unreasonably long waiting lists.
   ○ Ensure that women have knowledge of, and access to, all possible types of abortion.

➢ __Make abortions accessible at a later stage as well, when a continued pregnancy would endanger the health of the mother or when the fetus is not viable.__

➢ __Remove undue burdens on women__ such as "cooling off periods", parental consent, spousal or partner consent, multiple appointments necessitating multiple days off, etc.
   ○ For women under the age of 16, no parental consent is necessary, but an adult needs to be present.[141]

---

[139] According to the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. See this UN report, available at https://www.who.int/medicines/areas/human_rights/A_HRC_7_11.pdf?ua=1

[140] For example, in Poland, abortion is only lawful to safeguard the life or health of a woman, in situations of severe fetal anomaly, or where the pregnancy results from rape or another criminal act such as incest; and even in those situations in which abortion is legal, multiple barriers combine to limit women's access in practice. See Human Rights Watch, Polish Parliament Must Protect Women's Health and Rights, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/22/polish-parliament-must-protect-womens-health-and-rights. Additionally, abortions need to be accessible in practice, because despite the fact that abortion is legal in certain countries, it is not always accessible. Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain are some of the countries with tight regulations regarding abortion, including extended waiting periods, counseling sessions and high prices. See abortion-clinics.eu, Countries with restricted access, available at http://abortion-clinics.eu/abortion-europe/restrictive-access-foreign-women/

[141]A best practice in this regard is France. See IVG.gouv.fr, L'IVG pour mineures : comment ça se passe?, available at https://ivg.gouv.fr/l-ivg-pour-mineures-comment-ca-se-passe.html

○ Enough doctors, hospitals, clinics and others need to provide abortions, so that it is not only legal but easily accessible.

2. Contraception

➢ **Ensure that women have access to the morning after pill without a prescription** from a doctor, that pharmacies are required to sell them, and that it is reimbursed by public healthcare.

➢ **Ensure that women have access to doctors to be prescribed contraceptive means.** Require pharmacies to sell the various contraceptives methods, and for those to be reimbursed by public healthcare.

➢ **Reform the healthcare system so that all contraception is reimbursed** by providers of healthcare and services upon request, without any need to report patient age.

3. Education

➢ **Introduce accurate, mandatory classes on sexual reproductive health and rights in schools.** Establish a European standard for the curricula and ensure that schools comply with it.[142]

➢ Ensure that hospitals offer **free educational information and/or programmes on sexual reproductive health and rights**, and that women are informed about their rights, contraception, and protection against sexually transmitted diseases.

D. Surrogacy[143]

Surrogacy is a method of assisted reproduction. There are two types of surrogacy arrangements: gestational surrogacy, where the embryo is created via *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) using the eggs and sperm of the intended parents or donors, and traditional surrogacy, where the surrogate mother uses her own egg and is artificially inseminated using sperm from the intended father or a donor. A surrogacy agreement can be altruistic or commercial. Surrogacy is already legal in some European countries,

---

[142] The Council of Europe emphasised that sex education is one of the most critical issues in guaranteeing women's sexual and reproductive health. Nonetheless, even if some countries have established sex education in schools the information provided is not medically "accurate, scientific and age-appropriate" in a number of states or is focused on a "preparation for family life", according to the Council. In addition, in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, sex education either remains voluntary or policies allow children to be withdrawn from classes. See EUobserver, Council of Europe warns on backlash to abortion access, available at https://euobserver.com/health/140158

[143] Best practices include South Africa, California, New Hampshire, The Netherlands

including in the UK, Denmark, Ireland, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands, given that the surrogate does not receive any financial benefit.[144]

> ➢ **Legalize surrogacy agreements when they are altruistic** (not counting reimbursement of expenses)

> ➢ **Research potential ways to legalize commercial surrogacy** agreements, while ensuring that it does not increase the power of black markets.

E. <u>Conversion Therapy</u>

Conversion therapy refers to any form of treatment or psychotherapy which aims to change a person's sexual orientation or to suppress a person's gender identity.[145] The basic assumptions behind such therapy is that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is a disease, mental illness, deficiency or disability, that can be 'cured'. Conversion therapy is a delusory and harmful act, that can lead to depression, anxiety, drug use, homelessness, and suicide, with minors being the most vulnerable to such practice.[146]

> ➢ **Ban the practice of conversion therapy across Europe and the pathologization of trans identities[147]**. Ensure that no person will be allowed to advertise, offer or force a person to undergo such therapy. Further, no person can be forcibly removed from a member state for the purposes of undergoing a conversion therapy.

> ➢ **Promote social acceptance and psychological support** to anyone undergoing gender transition or identity exploration and development, including sexual orientation-neutral interventions.

---

[144] See Sensible Surrogacy, Surrogacy Laws Around the World, available at http://www.sensiblesurrogacy.com/surrogacy-law-worldwide/

[145] Stonewall, Conversion Therapy, available at http://www.stonewall.org.uk/campaign-groups/conversion-therapy

[146] Human Rights Campaign, The Lies and Dangers of Efforts to Change Sexual Orientation of Gender Identity, available at https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy

[147] excludes the prohibition of voluntary gender affirming procedures