

***LET'S GET
THE
FUTURE
BACK***

Volt

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FOR A COUNTRY THAT DARES TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE

In a time of constant and rapid change, what is needed is a courageous, progressive policy that makes progress possible, where old politics gets lost in ideological trench warfare and leads to stagnation – a policy that unites instead of divides and that looks optimistically to the future, where others sow fears and concerns. That's what Volt stands for.

Since Volt's founding in 2018, we have shown that we can make good politics. In local and European elections, we have brought a breath of fresh air and new, diverse perspectives to the parliaments. We are already actively shaping politics today – pragmatically, solution-oriented and always in the interests of all people. Our greatest strength? We think and act European. The best solutions are often right on our doorstep – with our neighbours. We just have to have the courage to accept it.

With Volt, a new generation is ready to take responsibility for Germany as well. Our policy is fact-oriented instead of ideological, European instead of national, and always geared towards the well-being of all people. The old structures have had their day.

Now it's time for something new. It's time for Volt. Let's overcome old structures together and create new ones that work – for everyone!

LET'S TAKE BACK THE FUTURE

***IT'S TIME
FOR A
GERMANY
THAT WORKS***

Volt

Germany is facing major challenges, but above all great opportunities. In a rapidly changing world, we can set the course for a country that not only keeps pace with the future, but actively shapes it. We have the chance to create a functioning Germany – for everyone.

Our goal must be a Europe that grows together, solves problems together and plays a pioneering role – be it in defending democracy and freedom, designing a modern security architecture or developing economic and technological innovations. A federal European Union enables closer cooperation and allows Europe to develop its full strength.

There is also great potential in Germany. Modern state reform strengthens federalism, creates clear responsibilities and makes the heart of our democracy – our municipalities – capable of acting. With the reform of the debt brake, we are paving the way for sustainable investments – in education, infrastructure and climate protection. In this way, we are setting the course for a secure and sustainable society.

Digitization offers us the opportunity to rethink administration. Instead of time-consuming visits to the authorities, we are creating a digital administration that works efficiently, close to people and simply – as is already the case with our European neighbours. Of course, we must ensure that everyone's fundamental rights are also upheld in the digital space.

At the same time, we need to rethink internal security: modern, European-networked and preventive. With an innovative foreign and security policy, we strengthen our position in the world and effectively advocate for freedom and justice.

The solutions are right on our doorstep. We just have to dare to take up the best ideas from all over Europe and develop them further. Estonia is showing how digitalization makes everyday life easier. Denmark combines climate protection and economic progress. Finland is proving how modern education opens up real opportunities for children. These examples are encouraging: the future can be shaped – and it is in our hands.

Now is the time to seize these opportunities: for a Germany that works. For a Europe that connects. For a world that sticks together. Now is the time to rethink politics – progressive, pragmatic and European. Let's shape this future together!

***WE ARE READY
FOR A
GERMANY
CAPABLE OF
ACTING IN A
UNITED EUROPE***

Challenges such as the climate crisis, international security and social cohesion require a European Union that is capable of acting, democratic and close to people. Germany also benefits directly from a strong, federal Europe that guarantees stability, economic opportunities and security. Due to its economic and political weight in the Union, Germany has a special responsibility to drive forward reforms, build bridges between member states and promote democratic and social innovation.

We are ready for a federal European republic that overcomes national interests, strengthens citizenship and protects democracy, the rule of law and diversity. This requires reforms that make the EU more efficient, transparent and closer to people. A strong European Parliament, a democratically legitimised government and a common constitution are the basis for making Europe fit for the future.

A united Europe enables social justice, secures peace and strengthens European cohesion. Now is the time to take responsibility – for a Germany that is capable of acting in a federal Europe that serves everyone!

UNITED IN DIVERSITY IN A FEDERAL EUROPEAN REPUBLIC

A Europe that thinks beyond national interests and acts together in the interests of all – the realisation of this idea is a democratically legitimised, federal European republic. To achieve this, we need a constitution that is shaped and legitimised by the European citizenry, European parties that represent their interests, a strong European Parliament and a real European government.

A EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION AS THE BASIS FOR A UNITED EUROPE

Europe needs a stable and democratically legitimised foundation in order to successfully master the challenges of the future – a European constitution. This guarantees democratic principles and the rule of law and strengthens the rights of all. It creates the framework for a Union that is capable of acting and thinks beyond national interests and promotes European cohesion. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Drafting of a European Constitution:** Accompanied by a public debate in all European states, a constitution is being developed that will enable the transition to a federal European republic.

- Joint act of will: A "coalition of the willing" quickly implements this constitution and the federal republic, with other countries able to join later.
- Constitution as a basis for real participation: The European Constitution strengthens the individual rights of all people in Europe and makes democratic institutions efficient and transparent.

A STRONG EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament is the democratic heart of the EU, but so far it cannot propose laws itself. As the only directly elected European institution, the European Parliament must be able to actively represent the concerns of the citizenry. This brings the EU closer to the people and gives them more of a voice. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Right of initiative for the European Parliament: The European Parliament can propose laws independently and is involved in all legislative procedures on an equal footing with the Council.
- Abolition of special procedures: Legislative procedures that exclude or circumvent the European Parliament will be abolished.
- From the Council of the EU to the second chamber: The Council of the EU becomes a directly elected second chamber, which is jointly responsible for legislation with the Parliament.

NOT ONLY GUARD TREATIES, BUT GOVERN!

The European Commission must become a real government that has democratic legitimacy and can govern effectively in the interests of the citizenry. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Real European government: The European Commission will become a parliamentary-controlled government with increased powers under the leadership of a head of government.
- Task-oriented ministries: The Commission and its members are replaced by ministries and, accordingly, heads of departments for specific areas of responsibility.

- Abolition of the European Council of Heads of State and Government: The European Council will be abolished in the long term.
- Own sources of revenue for the EU: The EU receives its own sources of revenue, such as a financial transaction tax or a digital tax.

SUBSIDIARITY AND REGIONAL DIVERSITY

Europe thrives on its regional diversity. Competencies must be bundled where they are most efficient. In this way, we can all benefit from a well-functioning EU that respects regional differences but acts together where and when necessary. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Decentralisation where possible: Competences and financial resources remain at regional and local level where it makes sense, e.g. infrastructure, services of general interest and cultural promotion.
- Centralisation where necessary: In areas such as foreign policy, uniform rules are created at European level and competences are pooled.
- Promotion of cross-border regions: Cross-border regions that build bridges between countries and strengthen European cohesion will receive special support.

MORE DIRECT PARTICIPATION THROUGH CITIZENS' COUNCILS

Citizens' councils serve the citizenry as a means of direct participation at the European level. In this way, they can help shape the EU in their own way, trust in the EU is strengthened and disenchantment with politics is reduced. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Networking of national citizens' assemblies: A project will be launched to network national citizens' assemblies.
- Establishment of European Citizens' Councils: In the long term, representative Citizens' Councils will be set up at European level to enable direct participation.

EUROPE NOW!

EUROPEAN PARTIES AND TRANSNATIONAL LISTS

The only way to a genuine European democracy is through European parties and transnational lists. This promotes Europe-wide decision-making, increases transparency and enables a common political discourse across national borders. We all benefit from a clearer and more direct link between our voice and the decisions in Europe. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Introduction of transnational lists: Transnational lists of candidates will be introduced for the European elections in order to enable a common political discourse across national borders.
- Creation of a genuine European law on political parties: In order to enable genuine European parties to be elected in the European elections in all EU Member States, and to ensure their equal treatment in terms of tax and financial treatment, a genuine European law on political parties will be created.
- Uniform European electoral law: A uniform European electoral law with the same standards will be created in all member states.

EFFICIENCY THROUGH MAJORITY VOTING

The principle of unanimity often prevents progress at EU level and is exploited by individual states to enforce their national agendas without regard for the European common good. Decisions in foreign policy, budgetary policy and other key areas must be taken by qualified majority. This is the only way the EU can act decisively and in the interests of all. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Abolition of the unanimity principle: The unanimity principle will be abolished in key areas such as foreign and budgetary policy in order to ensure the European Union's ability to act.

RULE

The rule of law is the foundation of the EU and protects common democratic values. The existing mechanisms must be consistently enforced and, where necessary, expanded in

order to strengthen freedom of the press, the independence of the judiciary and the fight against corruption. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Linking EU funding to the rule of law:** EU funding will be linked to compliance with the rule of law.
- **Strengthening the anti-corruption authorities:** The competences of the EU anti-corruption authority OLAF and the European Public Prosecutor's Office will be expanded.
- **Sanctions for violations of fundamental values:** Member States that violate fundamental values such as freedom of the press or the independence of the judiciary are consistently sanctioned.
- **Appointment of the judges of the European Court of Justice:** The European Parliament will be involved in the appointment of the judges of the European Court of Justice in order to increase its resilience to authoritarian forces.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A STATE
REFORM FOR
A
SUSTAINABLE
DEMOCRACY***

A sustainable democracy needs an efficient, people-oriented and effective state. In Germany, this means that we have to make federalism, which is often cumbersome, more dynamic, modernise the administration and ensure effective government action.

In view of growing tasks and decreasing resources at the same time, municipalities in particular must be strengthened structurally and financially. This is the only way they can guarantee comprehensive and high-quality services of general interest for all on the one hand and meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world on the other.

State reform is therefore indispensable in order to modernise the state, adapt federalism to today's times and make municipalities future-proof. It unleashes the state apparatus, making it more resilient at the same time, making life easier for everyone and strengthening trust in democracy. Now is the time to modernise the engine room of our democracy – for a dynamic, resilient and sustainable democracy.

FEDERALISM REFORM AND STRONG MUNICIPALITIES

Our federalism makes it possible to make decisions where they directly affect people: on the ground. For this to succeed, clear and efficient structures are needed, a fair distribution of resources and strong municipalities that are equipped with the necessary resources to fulfil their tasks effectively. A reform of federalism not only creates transparency and efficiency, but also ensures that municipalities become strong partners in a cooperative system. People feel that their concerns are being taken up and implemented directly. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Cooperative federalism: The responsibilities between the federal, state and local governments will be reorganised and made more efficient.
- Uniform digital processes: Controlled by the new Digital Ministry, digital processes are being standardised across all federal levels.
- Modern municipal financing: Trade tax will be replaced in a revenue-neutral manner and independent of the economic cycle, and the Concession Fees Ordinance will be fundamentally reformed in order to put municipal finances on a robust footing.

- Efficient allocation of funds: Greater fiscal autonomy for the Länder creates incentives for sustainable fiscal policy, and a demographic factor in the federal fiscal equalisation system ensures greater distributive justice.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

What makes a modern state is flexible and at the same time goal-oriented action in order to respond to new challenges with determination and in the interests of all. A government that works dynamically and interdisciplinarily, pursues clearly measurable goals and designs laws in a practical way lays the foundation for future-oriented action. This results in effective, comprehensible and reliable decisions – a policy that keeps its promises. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Results-oriented and interdisciplinary governance: The government relies on clear and measurable impact targets that are implemented transparently across departments. For particularly complex issues involving several ministries, flexible "project ministries" will be set up to promote interdepartmental cooperation.
- Laws that have a practical effect: Practical checks and real-world laboratories in which laws are first tested in the municipalities, as well as regular and consistent effectiveness reviews of the laws passed, ensure effective and practical legislation.
- Results-oriented budget: budget appropriations will be linked to concrete objectives that will be evaluated annually, and financial management will be harmonised at all levels in the transition to double-entry bookkeeping.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

A modern administration is the interface between people and public services and thus the backbone of a functioning, future-proof state. Digitalisation, innovative structures and attractive working conditions are making the administration more flexible, service-oriented and robust. We all benefit from faster processes, better access to services and an administration that is really there for us. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Innovative administration and modern personnel management: Adapted salary structures, the promotion of temporary civil servants and cross-sectoral staff rotation create an innovative administrative culture with new skills and flexible career paths.
- Intelligent and people-oriented bureaucracy: Central contact points ("one-stop shops") ensure simple and flexible administration that is oriented towards the needs of the people. Bureaucracy is reduced by automatically counting applications as approved if they are not processed by the deadline, and regulations are regularly reviewed and simplified to relieve the burden on people.
- Resilient and resilient administration: Measures such as targeted management training and further training for administrative staff to recognise fake news or fight corruption promote a resilient and resilient administration.

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

A strong democracy needs fair elections, transparent decision-making processes and the active participation of citizens. Targeted reforms such as the introduction of the substitute vote, a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy and separate budgets for local people promote political participation and strengthen trust in democratic institutions. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- Introduction of a substitute vote: Eligible voters can cast a substitute vote in addition to their main vote, which will be taken into account if the preferred party does not reach the percentage hurdle.
- Voting from the age of 16: The right to vote is reduced to 16 years and applies to all elections in Germany.
- Right to vote for EU nationals: EU citizens are granted the right to vote and stand for election in state and federal elections if they have lived in Germany for at least three years.
- Own budgets for local people: Municipalities make a fixed share of their budget – at least one euro per registered person – available for projects oriented towards the common good, on which the local people decide in a multi-stage process.

- **Fight corruption:** Introduce a national anti-corruption strategy, including a whistleblower protection programme and strict rules on secondary activities of decision-makers.
- **Transparency in politics:** Introduction of a "legislative footprint" that transparently shows which interests have influenced legislative processes.
- **Strengthen youth participation:** Young people between the ages of 12 and 20 develop demands in the form of a youth parliament, which are prioritized once a year. The five most important demands will be forwarded to the Bundestag in order to bring young perspectives into the parliamentary discourse.
- **Digital documents in elections:** The candidacy for the Bundestag election will be modernized by the complete digital submission of all documents as well as the electronic collection and confirmation of supporting signatures. This facilitates democratic access and reduces bureaucratic hurdles.

DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AGAINST EXTREMISM

Right-wing extremism, religiously motivated extremism and all other forms of extremism threaten public safety, social cohesion and the basic democratic order. A well-defended democracy must take decisive action against extremism, focusing on prevention, prosecution, victim protection and international cooperation. This is the only way to effectively protect people from violence, ensure social peace and strengthen trust in the rule of law. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- **Uniform recording and transparency:** A nationwide standardised reporting system will be introduced for the uniform recording of politically motivated crimes. A central pool of information documents extremist ideas and networks, which facilitates targeted prosecution.
- **Effective law enforcement:** The police and judiciary will be strengthened through specialised units, more human and financial resources and regular training. In addition, the penalties for hate crimes and support for extremist ideologies – especially in the digital space – will be tightened in order to create clear consequences for perpetrators.

- **Prevention:** Educational programmes in schools, youth centres and communities raise young people's awareness of the dangers of extremist ideologies at an early age. Civil society initiatives for education, prevention and social dialogue are supported in the long term.
- **A way out:** Interdisciplinary deradicalisation programmes and exit assistance promote resocialisation and prevent relapses.
- **Improved victim protection:** Regional contact points offer victims of extremist violence psychological support, legal advice and emergency assistance.
- **Better national and international cooperation:** A nationwide network connects security authorities, educational institutions and civil society activists in order to combat extremist structures more effectively. In addition, cooperation with international partners will be intensified in order to dismantle transnational networks and online platforms.

A UNITED EUROPE NEEDS A UNITED GERMANY

Almost 35 years after the beginning of German reunification, there are still differences between East and West Germany that shape social, economic and political life. Overcoming these is not only crucial in order to ensure equal livelihoods for all people in Germany and to promote social division. Only by overcoming these differences can we credibly advocate greater European integration.

DIALOGUE AT EYE LEVEL & REAL CO-DETERMINATION

A vibrant democracy thrives on the commitment of all and on dialogue at eye level. Political participation strengthens social cohesion and promotes trust in state institutions. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Regular Future Council:** People come together with representatives from politics, civil society organisations and business and employee associations according to the East German example of the "Round Table" and develop solutions together.

- **Citizens' councils:** Citizens' councils represent a platform for participation that increases the acceptance of political decisions.
- **All-German dialogue:** The Future Council, the Citizens' Councils and the Federal Government's Commissioner for Eastern Europe hold regular exchanges.

BUILDING CULTURAL BRIDGES

Our regional cultures are a strength that must be promoted and preserved. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Reunification and post-reunification period in the curricula:** In all federal states, schoolchildren learn content on inner-German history for a better understanding and mutual respect.
- **Promote funding for youth, association and cultural centres:** A fund from the federal and state governments secures spaces for encounters and participation.
- **Buyback and restructuring:** states and municipalities are supported to buy back empty properties for social and cultural projects.

SHAPING AN INNOVATIVE FUTURE TOGETHER

A strong economy is an important basis for prosperity and social justice. The promotion of regional developments and sustainable innovations secures long-term prospects and strengthens competitiveness. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Promotion of regional economic structure:** The "Joint Task for the Improvement of the Regional Economic Structure (GRW)" will be promoted more strongly and used for the targeted expansion of infrastructure and economic development.
- **Working from home in rural areas:** An incentive structure encourages companies to offer home office jobs in rural areas in order to retain skilled workers in the region.
- **Regional start-up centres:** Young founders are networked and empowered to become regional start-ups.

***WE ARE READY
FOR AN
INVESTMENT-FRIENDLY
STATE BUDGET***

An investment-friendly state budget is essential to achieve economic growth, social justice and climate neutrality. We all benefit from a sustainable fiscal policy that makes necessary investments, promotes innovation, creates jobs and strengthens social cohesion.

PUBLIC FINANCES – SOLID YET FLEXIBLE

Sound public finances ensure the state's ability to act in times of crisis and create the basis for Germany's economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development. By investing in a sustainable economy, we will succeed in the transition to a competitive, climate-neutral economy. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Balanced state budget:** A balanced ratio of income and debt to expenditure is needed.
- **Transparent budget management and long-term planning:** Through transparent budget management and long-term planning, we create trust and give our economy planning security.
- **Investments in infrastructure and in the transformation of our economy:** The necessary investments in our infrastructure will be made and the transformation of our economy will be driven forward.
- **Prevention of unnecessary expenditure:** The transferability of expenditure authorised in the budget will be reviewed and, if necessary, adjusted in order to prevent unnecessary expenditure at the end of the year ("December fever") in the future.

REFORM OF THE DEBT BRAKE FOR FUTURE-ORIENTED INVESTMENTS

A modern fiscal policy must create room for urgently needed investments without jeopardizing the long-term sustainability of public finances. However, Germany's rigid debt brake massively restricts important future investments in infrastructure, education, climate protection and digitalisation. A reform of the debt brake enables a sustainable and economically smart fiscal policy that strengthens current and future generations. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- **Golden Rule Plus:** Future-oriented net investments in areas such as infrastructure,

Education, climate protection and digitalisation are excluded from the debt brake in order to ensure sustainable growth and progress in the long term.

- Raising the deficit ceiling: The deficit limit will be raised to up to 1% of gross domestic product (GDP) as long as the debt ratio remains below 60% in line with the European stability criteria.
- Independent body: A council of experts will be set up to assess planned expenditure and ensure that it is actually channelled into future-oriented investment.

MORE COMMITMENT TO THE FIGHT AGAINST TAX AVOIDANCE AND CRIME

The consistent fight against tax avoidance and evasion secures urgently needed revenue, which can be used for education, health and infrastructure, for example. We all benefit from a fairer distribution of the tax burden and higher government revenues. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Closing loopholes: Legal alternative options for tax avoidance will be closed.
- Expansion of responsible institutions and use of modern technologies: tax investigations, customs investigations, specialised public prosecutors' offices and tax audits are to be expanded. Modern technologies are increasingly being used to detect tax avoidance and evasion more efficiently.
- International cooperation: The cross-border exchange of information on tax data is being expanded, and Germany is actively participating in international initiatives to close tax havens and harmonise tax law.
- Increase in penalty ranges: The prison sentence for particularly serious cases of tax evasion will be increased to up to 15 years, and minimum penalties for serious tax offences will be introduced to increase the deterrent effect.
- Extension of retention periods: The retention periods for tax and accounting documents will be extended to 15 years in order to strengthen long-term law enforcement.
- Reclaim of illegal profits: The CumEx and CumCum billions are consistently repatriated through increased tax and criminal prosecution.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A
DIGITAL
STATE***

Digitalization holds enormous potential, for example for more efficient administrative processes, technological innovations or the reduction of environmental pollution. At the same time, we urgently need a clear legal framework that protects the rights of all people and guarantees safe, efficient and people-oriented digitalisation. A reform of digital responsibilities and a well-thought-out IT strategy can promote trust in the state, social cohesion and economic progress. Now is the time to have the courage to break away from old structures and dare to try something new!

FRAMEWORK FOR A JUST AND SECURE DIGITAL FUTURE CLEAR AND EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

In Germany, the supervision of the digital space is distributed among over 80 authorities. This fragmentation stands in the way of efficient processes and clear responsibilities. Volt is committed to bundling these responsibilities in three clearly structured areas. This provides companies with clear official contact points. In this way, we are creating modern, citizen-friendly and innovation-promoting digital conditions for economic and social progress. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Pooling of responsibilities:** Supervisory authorities will be structured around three areas: cybersecurity, market surveillance and data protection.
- **Strengthening independence:** The Federal Office for Information Security (BSI) and the Federal Network Agency (BNetzA) will be placed on an equal footing with the Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (BfDI) in terms of their independence.
- **Independence of IT security:** The BSI will be separated from the Ministry of the Interior in order to eliminate the conflict of interest between IT security and the interests of security authorities in the exploitability of security gaps.
- **Digital economy at the BNetzA:** The BNetzA will become the central point of contact for the digital economy. This includes not only the central control of the implementation of the Data Act and the Data Governance Act, but also the central supervision within the framework of the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the AI Regulation, including the digital protection of minors. It secures the rights of users and supports companies in compliance issues.

- **Data protection and digital freedom:** In addition to the protection of personal data, the BfDI should also monitor the use of digital investigation methods for their constitutionally compliant use in order to safeguard digital personality and fundamental rights.

STRENGTHENING FUNDAMENTAL DIGITAL RIGHTS

We must preserve and strengthen digital fundamental rights, because they are of central importance for people's trust in the state. Clear legal framework conditions are needed to ensure the protection of privacy and prevent the misuse of surveillance technologies. This preserves the fundamental rights to privacy, informational self-determination and protection against arbitrary interference. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Rejection of surveillance technologies:** There is no nationwide use and no automatic evaluation of surveillance technologies. Systems for biometric real-time remote identification (RBI) will be banned – even in sensitive places such as borders and prisons. The conditions and responsibilities for (temporary) exceptions, for example for the fight against terrorism, are clearly and transparently defined.
- **Barriers to AI surveillance:** Legal barriers will be introduced for AI-based surveillance methods in connection with police investigations that comply with data protection and the constitution. A supervisory body based on the model of the *UK Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner* will be set up at the BfDI.

TRANSPARENT HANDLING OF SECURITY VULNERABILITIES

Transparent and proactive handling of digital security gaps strengthens trust in state and private IT systems. Researchers and companies must be able to actively contribute to improving safety. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Central directory for security vulnerabilities:** Security vulnerabilities are reported and fixed quickly and transparently in a central directory. The government and companies are actively working together to fix security vulnerabilities instead of preventing them from being disclosed.

- Protection for researchers: The so-called "hacker paragraph" will be abolished to protect researchers from prosecution.
- Rejection of state backdoors: State backdoors are clearly rejected due to the risk of abuse.

BALANCING DATA PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS AND INNOVATION

Smart regulation gives people control over their data and protects them from manipulative practices without compromising companies' ability to innovate. Clear standards and practicable guidelines turn data protection into a competitive advantage, promote digital fairness and strengthen consumer protection. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Regulations against manipulative practices: Clear standards ensure that people have control over their data and strengthen consumer protection. Practices such as dark patterns and algorithmic influence are clearly regulated by law.
- Digital Fairness Act: A functioning European Digital Fairness Act creates a common legal framework for consumer protection.
- Practical guidelines for companies: The BSI provides companies with clear tools for complying with the GDPR and protecting critical infrastructure that do not limit their innovative power. Data protection is becoming a competitive advantage.

BEST PRACTICE

Central Data Protection Register in Finland – Focus on transparency and efficiency

Finland relies on clear structures for handling personal data with a central data protection register. All relevant information is clearly recorded, which enables companies to process data easily and in compliance with the law.

DIGITAL ADMINISTRATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY

The digitalisation of the administration is helping to strengthen Germany as a modern and sustainable state and to consolidate people's trust in democracy. Digital transformation can make administrative action more efficient, transparent and closer to people. Germany needs a real digital revolution in administration. With a clear vision and decisive action, not only can the existing challenges be mastered, but also an administration can be created that meets the requirements of the 21st century.

A DIGITAL MINISTRY AS A CENTRAL PACESETTER

A central digital ministry steers the digital transformation of the administration towards efficient, modern and user-friendly services. These meet the needs of the people and at the same time strengthen Germany as a business location. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Creation of a digital ministry:** A new digital ministry defines the central IT strategy for Germany and is given guideline authority for all administrative levels. Duplicate structures are thus dismantled.
- **Uniform standards:** The ministry manages the consolidation of administrative software and IT systems and defines nationwide standards for true end-to-end digitization.
- **IT marketplace:** A central platform for the exchange of digital solutions between government agencies already exists. Their use will become mandatory to ensure the efficient use of state resources.

REDUCING BUREAUCRACY THROUGH DIGITIZATION

The digitization of administration makes government services easier, faster and more accessible. We all benefit from user-friendly and inclusive digital services that reduce bureaucracy and make our everyday lives easier. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Practical regulations:** Written form requirements are reduced and data protection requirements are implemented in practice.
- **Accessible administrative services:** User-friendly and mobile administrative services with electronic identification methods and e-payment options are provided proactively and automatically ("no-stop shop").
- **Consistent implementation of the "once-only" principle:** data only needs to be submitted once, authorities can then use it efficiently while ensuring data protection, and open data initiatives are promoted to support transparency and innovation.
- **Inclusive administrative services:** Digital administrative services are designed to be barrier-free, through multilingualism, sign language and standardised navigation.

BEST PRACTICE

Estonia as a pioneer of the digital administration of the future

Estonia offers 99% of all administrative services online, with exceptions such as marriages or land purchases. One example is business start-ups: 98% of companies are founded online via the e-business register, often in less than 20 minutes. Germany can learn from Estonia how secure digital identities and networking can make administrations more efficient.

DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Participation thrives on low hurdles and transparency. A central platform for public participation and a dashboard for transparent public finances strengthen trust in state processes and a sustainable democracy in which everyone can participate actively and easily. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Central platform for public participation:** A central platform facilitates access to political participation. It will be connected to established digital infrastructures such as DeutschlandID to ensure user-friendliness and security.
- **Transparent publication of government expenditures:** Government expenditures are published centrally and transparently in order to strengthen civil society understanding.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A
COMMON
INTERNAL
SECURITY***

A secure society is the basis for freedom, cohesion and a self-determined life. To do this, we need a modern security architecture that respects human rights, acts efficiently and meets the challenges of a globalised world. Organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime do not stop at borders – neither is our protection system. Only with close European cooperation, modern equipment and a clear focus of the security authorities can a safe and just society be guaranteed for all people.

It is crucial to reconcile security and freedom – through an efficient and well-coordinated European police force, clear legal bases and the strengthening of internal security in Germany. To this end, resources must be used efficiently, vulnerable groups must be protected and security in the digital space must be guaranteed.

Now is the time to work together to shape a Europe in which people can live safely and securely in freedom and peace and look to the future with confidence.

COMMON EUROPEAN INTERNAL SECURITY

EUROPOL

Organised crime and terrorism do not stop at national borders. However, effective protection and the investigation of cross-border crimes are severely limited by inconsistent regulations and Europol's lack of executive powers. We all benefit from a stronger European police force, which increases security in Europe in the long term through clear powers and executive independence. To this end, existing resources must be better used by improving the networking of national security authorities, for example with the help of a concept for joint (European) defence against terrorism and espionage. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Europol becomes European police:** Europol becomes a fully-fledged European police force with executive powers.
- **Extended legal basis:** The EU treaties will be adapted to create clear legal rules on Europol's powers.
- **Independent regional offices:** Europol regional offices will be set up, which will act independently of national police forces.

- **Parliamentary scrutiny:** A scrutiny committee guarantees Europol's accountability to the EU Parliament.
- **Effective legal protection:** There is effective legal protection against Europol's actions.
- **Protection of critical infrastructure:** In order to be able to better protect critical infrastructure in the future, Europol is setting up a contact point for intra-European coordination for the protection of critical infrastructure.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL BORDERS

Freedom of movement within the EU is a cornerstone of the European project. Effective security of the EU's external borders is crucial to permanently avoid stationary controls at internal borders and to prevent humanitarian disasters at the external borders. We all benefit from greater cooperation and a unified system of protection that combines freedom and security. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **A European Border Guard Agency:** The European border management agency Frontex will be dissolved. The national border guards will be merged into a new European authority to effectively combat crime.
- **A humanitarian asylum agency:** The EU Asylum Agency (EUAA) is being expanded to organise the reception, accommodation and distribution of asylum seekers. Reliable sea rescue and adequate medical care are guaranteed.
- **Parliamentary oversight and cooperation:** Both authorities are subject to the control of the European Parliament and work closely with civil organisations such as human rights organisations to ensure humane protection of Europe's external borders and those seeking protection in accordance with fundamental rights.

INTERNAL SECURITY IN GERMANY

Internal security must be guaranteed by the state at all times. This task requires both a solid set of rules and forward-looking planning. In addition, sufficient resources and personnel

must be available to adequately cope with the abundance of tasks. For some time now, however, it has been part of the everyday life of the police and public prosecutor's office that the workload increases and overtime is accumulated to an unjustifiable extent. A reduction in overtime and a normalization of the workload are not in sight. This jeopardizes the quality of work and creates a risk both for the staff and for the people whose safety it is supposed to ensure.

Law enforcement authorities and their staff must therefore be strengthened and supported in the best possible way in the fulfilment of their tasks.

RETURN TO CORE POLICE TASKS

Police are often overburdened with tasks outside their core area, which limits their ability to perform and endangers public safety. In addition, there is a shortage of staff in many places. A return to the core tasks and measures for recruiting personnel enables high-quality police work that increases the safety of the population. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Delegation of subsidiary tasks: Tasks such as dog tax controls or prison transports are returned to the responsible administrations.
- More staff for police and regulatory authorities: Länder and municipalities are being supported in recruiting personnel. This includes measures to make training more attractive.

SECURITY IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

People's lives are increasingly taking place in the digital space. Accordingly, crimes on the Internet are increasing sharply. These include, in particular, property crimes such as fraud and digital sexualised violence. The police must therefore be able to prosecute this cybercrime effectively and to be able to use state-of-the-art investigative methods and technologies to do so. The future use of AI-supported programs must also be examined, taking into account the associated risks.

MODERN EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGIES

A modern police force needs appropriate technical equipment to effectively combat crime. We all benefit from efficient and transparent policing. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Integration of digital technologies: Technologies and equipment, such as bodycams, reporting systems and analytics tools, will be more integrated into the service.
- Reform of the Code of Criminal Procedure: The Code of Criminal Procedure will be amended with regard to the proper use of bodycams.
- Expansion of the IT infrastructure: Necessary digital infrastructure, such as server capacities and IT security systems, will be expanded.

RESOLUTELY FIGHTING CYBERCRIME

With an ever-evolving threat landscape, it is important to ensure the protection of personal data and the digital security of everyone. This ensures trust in digital rights and at the same time the competitiveness of Germany as a business location. Clearly defined government contact points and practicable data protection regulations enable companies to work securely, in compliance with the law and in an innovation-friendly manner. At the same time, access to innovation-relevant data is made possible without interfering with personal rights. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Expansion of cybercrime units: Cybercrime units of the police and judiciary will be strengthened.
- European standards for fundamental rights: Clear standards for the protection of fundamental digital rights, especially in the use of state trojans, will be set at EU level.
- Protection of sensitive data: Administrations at all levels are empowered by appropriate resources to effectively protect sensitive personal data.

FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME

The increasing threat of organised crime endangers the democratic and constitutional system. Strengthened law enforcement protects the population from the effects of these crimes. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Increased personnel: Special units at the BKA, customs and in the federal states will be strengthened.
- Better coordination: Greater digitalisation will improve cooperation between security organs.
- Digital goods control: Imported goods are systematically controlled, for example by digital systems in ports.

ADAPTED LAW ENFORCEMENT

Effective and efficient prosecution is essential to solve crimes quickly and fairly. We all benefit from accelerated case processing, better cooperation between authorities and a targeted use of resources. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Digitization of case processing: The entire process from the filing of the complaint to the public prosecutor's office will be digitized.
- Uniform case processing system: There is a uniform case processing system for all police authorities.
- Targeted prosecution: The opportunity principle is being expanded to make more efficient use of police resources.

NATIONWIDE STANDARDS FOR THE POLICE

The challenges of modern crime require uniform and coordinated police work throughout Germany. We all benefit from more efficient law enforcement, the same standards and improved protection against crime in all regions of German land. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Uniform Police Act:** A nationwide police law ensures the same regulations and processes in all federal states.
- **Uniform training:** Study and training standards for the police will be standardised.
- **Modern equipment:** Police units will receive state-of-the-art, state-of-the-art equipment and technology throughout Germany.
- **Financial equalization:** The financial resources of the state police forces will be aligned.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Every person in Germany has the right to security and protection from discrimination, violence and hate crime. Targeted measures are needed to protect particularly vulnerable groups, strengthen their rights and promote a social climate of acceptance and tolerance. We all benefit from an inclusive society that values diversity and ensures public safety for all.

SAFETY FOR PEOPLE IN THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

Increasing violence against LGBTQIA+ people, especially trans people, threatens safety and the right to a self-determined life. Those affected must be better protected and awareness of the challenges and dangers of this community must be raised. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Cooperation with organisations:** Assistance and prevention measures are being expanded through cooperation with civil society organisations.
- **Public awareness campaigns:** Public relations work increases awareness of exclusionary violence and anti-LGBTQIA+ behaviour.
- **Targeted contact points:** Victims of violence are given specific contact points that respond to their needs.

SAFETY FOR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Religious groups, especially Jewish and Muslim communities, are increasingly confronted with threats and hate crimes. It is important to strengthen the protection of religious freedom and the security of religious institutions. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Protection of religious institutions: The protection and security of places of worship and places of worship will be expanded.
- Campaigns against hate crimes: Awareness campaigns to reduce prejudice against religious groups will be expanded.
- Increased state support: Municipalities receive more support through state and civil society cooperation.

SAFETY FOR PEOPLE WITH EXPERIENCE OF RACISM

Discrimination and unfair treatment by security authorities undermine trust in public safety and justice. Targeted measures are needed to combat racist practices and empower those affected. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Independent complaints bodies: Independent complaints bodies will be expanded to take stronger action against discrimination.
- Diversity in the police and judiciary: Targeted measures, for example on inclusion and accessibility, make careers in the police and judiciary more attractive for members of underrepresented groups.
- Mandatory training: Security forces are trained to recognize and prevent unintentional discrimination.

CHILD AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY – MORE HELP FOR MINORS AND HELPERS

The care of unaccompanied minor refugees and delinquent juveniles is a particular challenge. In order to counter this, care capacities must be expanded and sustainable

integration promoted. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Information services for volunteers: Information about volunteer work is being expanded in order to attract more people.
- Promotion of men in social professions: Men are specifically motivated and qualified for professions in social work.
- Prevention programmes: Juvenile delinquents are supported at an early stage through prevention measures.
- Resources for care: Volunteers and full-time caregivers are given sufficient resources to provide high-quality help.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A
CONTEMPORARY
FOREIGN AND
SECURITY POLICY
IN A POLARISED
WORLD***

In a globalised world, conflicts all over the world always have a direct or indirect impact on Germany and Europe. Only by actively taking responsibility for resolving conflicts can we effectively eliminate their impact on ourselves. Now is the time for us as a European community to actively defend our security interests.

A STRONG AND SOVEREIGN EUROPE INTEGRATED FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY IN THE EU

In a multipolar world, a strong and independent Europe is the best guarantee of peace, stability and prosperity. We all benefit from a Europe that can effectively protect itself through clear positions and strategic independence and actively shape global challenges. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Strengthening the European External Action Service (EEAS): Nation-state external services will be integrated into the European External Action Service. This enables Europe to speak with one voice.
- Independent trade strategies: Europe is developing independent trade strategies to reduce economic dependencies.
- Reform of NATO: NATO will be reformed to ensure qualified majority voting and stability in the face of political instability of individual members.
- European independence: In view of the foreign policy unpredictability and political instability of the USA, European independence is strengthened and partnerships are diversified.
- Nuclear defence capability: Nuclear sharing in the EU will be further developed on the basis of French capacities. This will secure the EU's defence capability and reduce dependencies on external actors. At the same time, Volt remains committed to nuclear disarmament, supports the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and is committed to the global disarmament of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

FROM THE BUNDESWEHR TO THE EUROPEAN ARMY

The future of German security lies in European cooperation. A European army not only strengthens Germany's defence, but also saves costs, increases efficiency and makes us less dependent on foreign actors. We all benefit from greater security, stable partnerships and effective defence capacities. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Creation of a European army:** A European army with uniform equipment, tactics and procurement will be established in order to reduce costs and strengthen defence capability.
- **Increasing defence spending:** Germany is increasing its defence spending to at least 3% of GDP to promote modernisation and equal partnership within the EU and NATO.
- **Flexibilization of personnel structures:** To modernize, personnel structures, tactics and training will be adapted and made more flexible, and bureaucracy and digitization will be promoted.
- **Strengthening the reserve:** Better equipment, regular exercises for reserve service members and additional incentives will increase the acceptance of reserve service and make the reserve capable of acting in an emergency.

EFFICIENT PROCUREMENT AND ARMAMENTS POLICY

A modern and effective Bundeswehr protects the security of Germany and its population. Defence funds must be used efficiently to create a powerful and modern army that can act quickly and effectively in an emergency. A comprehensive reform of procurement and armaments policy is a prerequisite for the success of the turning point. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Accelerated procurement:** The € 25 million parliamentary bills for armaments projects will be abolished, but transparency will be created by publishing all contracts and the Federal Procurement Office (BAAINBw) will be strengthened.

- Decentralized capability management: For realistic capability management, responsibility for capability management is transferred from the planning office to the respective branches of the armed forces and their inspectors.
- Flexible procurement processes and active innovation management: Faster and more flexible procurement and awarding processes make it possible to react appropriately to changing requirements and to work successfully with start-ups.
- Active industrial policy: There is a central management of all strategically important supplier companies, taking into account key competencies, capacity utilization, capacities and supply chains in Europe.
- Turning point in major projects: performance, delivery time and costs are in the foreground. The testing of prototypes before the contract is awarded ensures real European competition.
- Reform of weapon system approval: Approval focuses on operational testing and evaluation by the armed forces, rather than maximum product safety and compliance with civilian standards.

DEALING WITH GLOBAL CONFLICTS

The number of armed conflicts has increased significantly in the last 15 years. Even though Germany itself is not the target of direct attacks, the indirect effects, such as the rising cost of living, are also noticeable in Germany. It is therefore in our interest to take a more active role in resolving international conflicts. This includes in particular increased diplomatic engagement, but also increased deployment of the Bundeswehr. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Closing ranks in Europe: Germany is stepping up its efforts to act in accordance with the interests of our European partners in foreign and defence policy. The European pillar within NATO will be strengthened.
- Dealing with paralyzed UN: In view of the current paralysis of the United Nations, multilateral conflict resolution outside the UN will be strengthened.
- Germany's active role: Germany plays an active role in shaping international missions and ensures that action is taken within the framework of international legal standards.

- Transnational relations: On the basis of shared values, Germany is gaining new transatlantic partners and expanding existing relations.

CHINA – REALIGNING THE BALANCE BETWEEN VALUES AND THE ECONOMY

In recent decades, the People's Republic of China has developed into Germany's most important trading partner. On the one hand, this partnership makes a significant contribution to the prosperity of both countries. On the other hand, the dependence of the German economy on China is growing, as the example of the automotive industry shows. At the same time, China is increasingly turning away from liberal-democratic values and a rules-based world order, and has thus entered into a systemic rivalry with the Western world. This poses a dilemma for German politics: How can we protect our values without endangering our prosperity?

RESOLUTELY COUNTERING SYSTEMIC RIVALRY

Values such as democracy and the rule of law, individual freedom and the commitment to human rights are the cornerstone of our prosperity. That is why we must protect these values and put them above economic constraints. We need a foreign policy that actively protects our fundamental values, counteracts influence and draws clear consequences in the event of violations of German and European interests. We all benefit from consistent protection of our democracy, infrastructure and social integrity. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Promotion of democratic values: China's ideas of a world order are contrasted with a European, liberal-democratic image – especially in the Global South.
- Protection of infrastructure: Critical infrastructures are actively protected from Chinese influence.
- Consistent countermeasures: The influence of the Chinese government on German society, politics, authorities, universities and companies will be addressed and tackled more strongly and consistently.

REDUCE ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

In order to mitigate the economic risks in relations with China, the EU's de-risking strategy must be supported. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Diversification of supply chains:** German companies are better supported in diversifying supply chains and markets.
- **Fair competitive conditions:** The same investment conditions for Chinese companies in Germany as for German companies in China will be implemented more quickly.
- **Securing strategic raw materials:** There are increased efforts to secure strategic raw materials (e.g. rare earths) in the European network.
- **Strengthening vulnerable industries:** The resilience of industries that would potentially be affected by a trade conflict is strengthened.

POLICY OF THE OUTSTRETCHED HAND

Despite growing differences, the focus on common challenges facing the two countries must not be lost. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Cooperation on global challenges:** Issues such as the climate crisis, poverty reduction and pandemic prevention are tackled together.
- **Promotion of civil society dialogues:** Exchange between civil society actors through the promotion of cultural centres and exchange programmes strengthens cooperation and mutual understanding.
- **Expansion of state channels of communication:** Direct dialogues with China are being expanded to avoid and reduce tensions.

WAR IN UKRAINE – THE FIGHT FOR A SECURE AND FREE EUROPE

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched the largest war of aggression in Europe since the Second World War with the invasion of Ukraine in violation of international law. Today, many people in Germany are following this war with growing concern for their own security. Russia threatens us and other countries with hybrid warfare: disinformation on social media and the promotion of anti-European and anti-democratic actors are actively working to divide our societies. Only if we show that, despite these concerns, we are prepared to defend our security and freedom in German and Europe together, will lasting peace come within reach.

Without a resolute, joint and consistent long-term stance by German and the EU vis-à-vis Russia, there is a risk that something similar to what happened after 2008 and 2014 will be repeated. This must be prevented. To this end, Ukraine must also be more closely integrated into economic and security structures in Europe and the Western world after the end of the war.

THE ROAD TO THE END OF THE WAR

The territorial integrity of Ukraine is inalienable. This means that Russia's illegal annexation of Ukrainian territories since 2014 must not be recognised. Since then, Germany has stood by Ukraine as an important part of a broad alliance of democratic states, but must decide more quickly and decisively in the future. Russia must be shown clear limits in order to bring it to the negotiating table. Because this war can only be ended diplomatically and not militarily. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Coordinated military assistance:** Together with Ukraine and its partners, Germany is developing a strategic concept for military support, supplying all the necessary weapons and enabling their unrestricted use.
- **Diplomatic pressure:** From a position of strength, Ukraine independently decides on the timing and conditions of negotiations conducted with international participation – including by China.
- **Return of annexed territories:** Russia is returning all of Ukraine's annexed territories in violation of international law.

- **Consistent sanctions:** The sanctions policy against Russia will be swiftly expanded and strictly implemented in order to increase political and economic pressure.

FUTURE AFTER THE END OF THE CONFLICT

After the end of the conflict, the focus is on the reconstruction of Ukraine and its integration into Europe and the Western world. This requires sustained support that creates stability, accompanies the reform process and strengthens Ukraine on its path to the EU. We all benefit from a peaceful, stable and united European neighbourhood. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Reparations payments:** Confiscated Russian funds will be used for Ukraine's reconstruction and EU integration.
- **Security guarantees:** International partners are working together to ensure Ukraine's long-term security.
- **Integration into European structures:** Ukraine will be gradually integrated into European security and economic systems.

***IT'S TIME
FOR AN ECONOMY
THAT IS
CLIMATE-NEUTRAL,
COMPETITIVE AND
SOCIAL***

Volt

Climate neutrality, competitiveness and social justice must not be played off against each other, because they are the key to a sustainable German state. It's time for a progressive update of our economy.

Our economy must be competitive and innovative. It must assert itself in global competition with new forces and disruptive technologies, create jobs and secure the needs of our community.

Our economy must become climate-neutral. It is time for us to do our part to comply with the Paris Climate Agreement. To achieve this, we need to significantly reduce emissions in Germany over the next few years and be climate-neutral by 2040 at the latest. A modern economy protects the climate, limits global warming to a minimum and preserves biodiversity and habitats – it operates within planetary boundaries. The goal is an innovative, sustainable and resilient circular economy for new opportunities and future-proof business.

A good economy serves us humans. First and foremost, it satisfies our existential needs and enables us to live a fulfilled life. Where the economy does not provide this, the state steps in for society.

Now is the time for solution-oriented and evidence-based measures to strengthen the German and European economy. This includes a holistic climate protection policy, a sustainable and socially responsible transformation of the economy and the targeted promotion of climate-neutral growth and innovation. That is why entrepreneurship and SMEs in particular must be strengthened as engines of our competitiveness.

***WE ARE READY
FOR INNOVATION
AND
COMPETITIVENESS***

High energy costs, international competition and demographic change require innovative solutions and decisive action. These challenges are an incentive to make our business location a sustainable area for innovation, climate protection and social justice.

For a strong economy in the heart of Europe, we need to reduce bureaucracy in order to relieve the burden on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to ensure fair competitive conditions through greater tax justice. Investments in renewable energies, climate-friendly technologies and sustainable infrastructure strengthen economic growth and secure jobs.

Our country must become an attractive destination for international skilled workers where the innovation potential of our researchers and start-ups can unfold. Together, we are shaping an economy that is not only competitive, but also socially and ecologically sustainable – for Germany to be a strong business location in the heart of a united Europe.

WORKERS AND SKILLED WORKERS

The shortage of labour and skilled workers burdens the German economy with over 90 billion euros every year. This corresponds to more than two percent of gross domestic product. Targeted measures are needed to increase the number of workers and skilled workers.

FACILITATING IMMIGRATION

A more efficient immigration system is crucial to counter the shortage of skilled workers and to strengthen Germany as an attractive place to work. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Digital matching:** A new digital platform efficiently connects employers with potential employees.
- **Digital one-stop shop:** In the future, immigrants will be able to submit all necessary applications online on one platform, submit documents and track the processing status. Visa applications are digitized, simplified and processed within a maximum of three months.

- Unconditional work permit: Immigrants receive a work permit from day one, regardless of their residence status. Residence permits are decoupled from specific employers in order to offer more flexibility to migrants.
- Accelerated recognition of qualifications: The recognition of educational and professional qualifications is no longer individual, but on the basis of the equal value of the occupational profile in the country of training.

BEST PRACTICE

Canada's IRCC website

Exemplary digital migration services: The website of the Canadian Ministry of Immigration, Flight and Nationality (IRCC) sets the standard in terms of accessibility, usability and resources. It shows how a national authority can effectively use digital tools and comprehensive information to support immigrants and immigrants and relieve the burden on the administration.

INTERNATIONAL TRAINEES

Bilingual training programmes open up access to training places for international talents and promote the mobility and flexibility of the German labour market. Trainees and companies benefit from stronger international networking and a globally competitive working environment. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Bilingual education programs: Training programs are offered in English or in a language spoken in the respective border region, similar to many higher education programs.
- English as a foreign language: In the long term, English will become a matter of course in vocational training and part of the training curricula.
- Promoting global mobility: Training programmes prepare trainees for the international labour market and increase their chances with global companies.

WOMEN*, THE ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

To increase the employment rate of women*, older people and people with disabilities, Volt is committed to this future:

- Abolition of false incentives: Spouse splitting will be abolished, parental allowance will be reformed and each parent will be guaranteed an individual entitlement to seven months of parental allowance in future.
- Childcare services: At the same time, the childcare services for children and those in need of care will be significantly expanded. No one should be forced to do unpaid care work because of a lack of care facilities.
- Parental protection for the self-employed: Parental protection for the self-employed is guaranteed to make it easier for parents to become self-employed.
- Older people and people with disabilities: Self-determined access to the labour market for older people and people with disabilities will be facilitated by a reform of Social Security Books VI and IX.

LIFELONG QUALIFICATION

To ensure that all people have opportunities on the labour market and can contribute to an efficient and innovative economy, Volt is committed to this future:

- Right to further education: Every person is given the right to be released from work for further training in future-oriented professions, especially in STEM professions.
- Social plans: Large companies will be obliged to finance further training in future-oriented occupations for employees affected by redundancies.

REDUCING BUREAUCRACY FOR COMPANIES

Public administration must change from a locational disadvantage to a locational advantage. To this end, administrative procedures are being digitised, significantly accelerated and a culture of making them possible is being created. The burden of complying with laws is reduced and EU law is consistently implemented one-to-one. This relieves the burden on companies. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Supply chain due diligence obligations:** The reporting obligations of the German Supply Chain Act (LkSG) will be deleted and the personal scope and substantive law will be aligned with the European Supply Chain Act (CSDDD). In countries with a comparable level of law enforcement, due diligence obligations only apply if there are concrete indications of violations of legal interests in the supply chain (whitelist).
- **Data protection:** In the future, only the official contact point at the registered office of a company will be responsible for the data protection interests of this company. At the European level, data protection impact assessment (Art. 35 GDPR) is facilitated, for example by clear, uniform criteria for the necessity of implementation as well as by reducing bureaucracy and standardising procedures.
- **Building permits:** Planning and approval procedures for industrial plants and infrastructure projects will be simplified and will be completed after three months at the latest.

REDUCTION OF ENERGY PRICES

Energy prices are a key factor in the competitiveness of our economy, especially industry. In addition to a consistent energy transition, affordable and competitive energy prices must be ensured. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Energy tax:** The energy tax will be reduced to the minimum permissible under EU law and will be abolished completely at EU level in the long term.
- **Relief in grid charges:** Grid expansion in line with transformation is a generational task that cannot be financed by users alone. In future, parts of the pay-as-you-go network charges will therefore be covered by the federal budget.

COMPETITIVE CORPORATE TAXES AND INVESTMENT INCENTIVES

The tax burden on German companies is high by international standards, and even the second highest in the EU. At the same time, companies must bear a fair share of the costs of the community. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Reduction of corporate taxes on OECD funds:** The effective tax burden on companies will be adjusted to the average of OECD countries, thus ensuring fair competitive conditions for German companies in an international comparison.
- **EU corporate tax:** An EU minimum corporate tax with a common tax base reduces tax avoidance within the EU.
- **Investment premium:** An unbureaucratic investment premium of 10% of the investment sum for the next two years provides incentives for private investment that benefits technological innovation and the climate-friendly transformation of our economy.
- **Targeted subsidies:** Sustainable investments are supported by subsidies for renewable energies, innovative technologies and climate-friendly projects.
- **Incentives for private investment:** Tax depreciation and other financial incentives encourage private investment.
- **Modernised public procurement law:** More flexible selection criteria make public procurement law more efficient.
- **State as a venture capitalist:** The role of the state as a financier of innovative and transformative solutions is expanded. The leverage effect from the combination of public and private capital is strengthened.
- **Regional economic development:** Structurally weak regions benefit from locally developed concepts for the settlement of people and businesses as well as from the networking of municipalities.

YOUNG COMPANIES AND START-UPS AS DRIVERS OF A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Start-ups are crucial for the innovative capacity and competitive strength of our economy. Young companies create jobs, promote technological progress and contribute to social and ecological transformation. We all benefit from new solutions, a dynamic economy and strengthened entrepreneurship. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Financial security:** The self-employed are supported by better protection. Start-up scholarships at state level are being expanded. And young companies will benefit from an increase in the VAT exemption limit.
- **Access to venture capital:** Tax incentives for institutional investors make it easier for German start-ups and young companies to access private finance capital.
- **Incubators and networks:** Start-up networks and incubators will be strengthened.
- **Social entrepreneurship:** Social entrepreneurship, such as social start-ups, will be given greater support. In addition, stewardship ownership introduces a new legal form for companies with tied assets.

INNOVATION AND KEY TECHNOLOGIES

Innovations and key technologies such as artificial intelligence, hydrogen, biotechnology and new materials ensure the long-term competitiveness of the German economy. They drive the socially just green transformation, create new jobs and promote sustainable development – for the benefit of people and companies. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **European technology promotion:** Currently, each EU member state supports its own companies in technology research (so-called IPCEI). In order to be competitive with the major technology areas of the USA and China, future technologies must be jointly promoted by the EU in the future.
- **Tax deductibility of research and development:** The tax deductibility of research and development expenses will be increased to at least 50%.

- **Start-up culture and public risk capital:** The start-up culture is already being promoted in education and training. Transformative solutions are supported by public investment and the provision of venture capital.
- **Supplementation of research centres with start-up centres:** State research centres such as universities, the Fraunhofer Institutes or Forschungszentrum Jülich will be supplemented by start-up centres in order to support spin-offs and successfully bring new technologies to market in Germany and Europe.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS AN OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR GERMANY

Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the central technologies of the 21st century that has the potential to fundamentally change our lives, our society and the way we live together – with enormous opportunities, but also risks. To ensure that this transformation is ethical, sustainable and in the interests of all, a clear and responsible framework is needed that promotes the development of AI in Germany while protecting the interests of all.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A DRIVER OF ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

The development and application of AI offers immense opportunities for the German and European economy. AI can strengthen competitiveness, alleviate the shortage of skilled workers and create new jobs. At the same time, we must ensure that innovations are driven forward in a legally compliant, sustainable manner and for the benefit of all. We all benefit from a dynamic economy, new professional fields and climate-friendly technologies. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Promoting innovation:** The European AI Act will be implemented in a legally secure and innovation-friendly manner.
- **Regulatory sandboxes:** Secure test environments are promoted through appropriate financing and unbureaucratic access, including across borders.
- **Labour market adaptation:** Retraining and further training measures prepare people for AI-supported occupational fields.

- Access to finance: Funding and venture capital for AI projects will also be facilitated at the European level.
- Sustainable technologies: The use of energy-efficient data centers and economic incentives for climate-efficient AI solutions will be strengthened.

RESEARCH AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SOVEREIGNTY AND EXCELLENCE

Cutting-edge research in the field of artificial intelligence is crucial to secure technological sovereignty and drive innovation. Through high-performance infrastructures and the exchange of knowledge between research and industry, Germany is strengthening its role as a leading location for AI development. We all benefit from innovative solutions, scientific progress and a dynamic economy. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- High-performance data centres: The expansion of high-performance data centres in the EU is being driven forward.
- Common Data Spaces: Access to research data in relevant sectors is facilitated by shared data spaces.
- Strengthening knowledge sharing: Long-term funding programmes and support for open source projects strengthen the exchange of knowledge between academic research and industry.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESPONSIBLE AI

Artificial intelligence offers great opportunities, but requires a clear legal framework to minimise risks such as discrimination, data misuse and disinformation. All people should have freedom of choice and security in the handling of their data, while innovative and responsible use of data is promoted. A uniform legal framework strengthens trust and protects society. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Freedom of choice: Private individuals are given freedom of choice about the use of their data for AI applications.

- Responsible data use: Privacy-friendly models such as Common Data Spaces promote innovation and security.
- Legal framework: The consistent application of the GDPR, the AI Act as well as the Digital Markets and Digital Services Act protects society and individuals from discrimination, disinformation and data misuse by AI.

EU SINGLE MARKET AS A STABILISER AND OPPORTUNITY AT THE SAME TIME

World trade is increasingly determined by geopolitics. This increases the importance of the EU single market as a stabiliser and springboard for German companies.

An efficient financial market is crucial for the competitiveness and innovative capacity of the European economy. To this end, barriers to cross-border business activities must be removed. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Creation of an efficient EU capital market: Cross-border investments will be simplified, thus increasing the capital available to finance new business ideas and transformation.
- European legal framework for companies: Cross-border business activities in the EU will be strengthened by a single legal area for European companies. To this end, an optionally applicable EU law in the areas of contract law (esp. Purchase, work and loan law), labour law (including effective occupational health and safety and co-determination), corporate law (esp. Creation of an EU GmbH), and tax law (esp. EU VAT and Corporate Income Tax).
- Working in other EU countries: Working in other EU countries will be simplified. In the future, an A1 certificate will no longer be required for this. In order to do justice to the cross-border realities of life, a European social insurance scheme (as a settlement model or as a separate voluntary social insurance) will be introduced in the future.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A HOLISTIC
CLIMATE
PROTECTION
POLICY***

Holistic climate protection means consistently aligning all political decisions and administrative processes with sustainability. We need a policy that responds flexibly and innovatively to the climate crisis, creates transparency and actively involves society. The benefits for people lie in a healthy environment, strengthened social cohesion and a sustainable economy that ensures quality of life. Now is the time to set the course - for a strong economy within planetary boundaries.

TRANSFORMING OUR ECONOMY TO PRESERVE OUR LIVELIHOODS

An economy that preserves our livelihoods must be both ecologically sustainable and socially just. This requires a fundamental transformation towards an economy that respects planetary boundaries and at the same time meets social needs. We all benefit from a sustainable economy that reduces ecological damage, reduces social inequalities and secures a future worth living.

We must promote sustainable industries, support SMEs on their way to climate neutrality and make our energy supply more resilient. Through clever economic policy measures, such as reducing bureaucracy, investing in renewable energies and fair pricing of ecological costs, we are creating the basis for a resilient and environmentally friendly economy.

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

A sustainable economy preserves our livelihoods, strengthens innovation and ensures social justice. We must use market-based mechanisms to take ecological and social costs into account in economic decision-making processes. In this way, we are creating a sustainable economy that takes everyone with it. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Social market-based mechanisms for sustainability: The European emissions trading system (ETS-2) will be expanded as planned at the beginning of 2027. In addition, VAT on products and services will be adjusted depending on key sustainability criteria. In future, at least 33% of revenues from CO₂ taxes and emissions trading will flow back to people through direct payments and will compensate for this, especially in structurally

weak areas (such as the regional climate bonus in Austria). The resulting CO₂ costs are made transparent via the product price, thus enabling conscious purchasing decisions.

- Alternative economic indicators: GDP should no longer be used as the sole reference for measuring economic performance. New indicators that take into account social and environmental factors are being developed to measure our economic performance more realistically.

BEST PRACTICE

Regional climate bonus in Austria

Since 2022, CO₂ pricing has been in force in Austria, which was implemented as part of an eco-social tax reform. The climate bonus is paid out to compensate for the increase in energy costs and fuel prices and amounts to a maximum of 290 euros and at least 145 euros per year (2024). It depends on the regional expansion of climate-friendly infrastructure (public transport, energy supply) and also takes into account children and people with limited mobility.

A MODERN INDUSTRY IS CLIMATE-NEUTRAL

Industry is responsible for a significant proportion of greenhouse gas emissions. A rapid switch to production without CO₂ emissions is essential in order to achieve climate targets as well as to secure the business location. It reduces dependencies on fossil raw materials and creates sustainable jobs. We all benefit from a sustainable business location in Germany that adapts to the challenges of the future and at the same time protects the environment. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Limitation of fossil fuels: The use of fossil fuels in industrial plants will be limited until 2035, and new plants must use climate-neutral energy sources such as electricity and hydrogen.
- Promotion of modern manufacturing processes: Processes to avoid process-related greenhouse gas emissions and the development of chemical processes that use CO₂ as a raw material (CCU) are promoted.

- CO₂ capture and storage (CCS): CCS technologies are used for unavoidable emissions, such as in the cement industry .

ABOLISHING CLIMATE-DAMAGING SUBSIDIES

The abolition of climate-damaging subsidies opens up three opportunities at once: With this step, we can reduce emissions on a large scale, make the national budget more efficient and secure the financing of groundbreaking climate protection projects and social compensation measures for a sustainable and just transition. This triple win – fewer emissions, a more stable national budget and additional funds for urgently needed investments – shows that the abolition of climate-damaging subsidies is not only a climate policy necessity, but also an economic and social necessity. It not only creates a sustainable budget, but also makes climate protection a supporting pillar of economic and social transformation. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- Immediate measures by the end of 2025: The tax exemption for kerosene will be abolished, a national kerosene tax will be introduced and supplemented by a Europe-wide minimum taxation. Company car taxation for fossil vehicles will be increased to 2% of the gross list price.
- Medium-term measures by the end of 2026: The distance allowance will be adjusted to the real costs of sustainable mobility options, and distances over 50 km will be completely excluded. The diesel tax will gradually be aligned with the petrol tax.
- Long-term measures until 2028: All subsidies that directly promote the use of fossil fuels in industry will be completely phased out. At the same time, funding programmes for emission-free technologies are being set up.
- Monitoring: The Federal Environment Agency reviews subsidies annually for possible climate-damaging effects with the aim of reducing them quickly.
- Reinvestment of the funds saved: The funds saved will be fully invested in the expansion of renewable energies, climate-friendly mobility and social compensation measures.

HOLISTIC CLIMATE PROTECTION POLICY

Effective climate protection is crucial to mitigate the consequences of the climate crisis and create a sustainable future. We all benefit from a policy that creates transparency, enables us to make informed consumption decisions and ensures the responsible use of resources. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Interdisciplinary work: Interdepartmental cooperation is promoted in order to: to develop innovative, effective and pragmatic solutions for climate protection.
- Transparency through CO₂ balancing: An annually updated dashboard provides transparency on emissions from import and export activities.
- Reliable product information: Consumers receive easily accessible, transparent and reliable product information to enable them to make climate-friendly and sustainable decisions.
- Climate impact assessment: Political decisions are subject to mandatory reviews in order to prevent negative impacts on the climate at an early stage.
- Communication of climate targets: Progress and challenges in climate protection are communicated transparently in order to strengthen trust and acceptance.
- Climate protection at all political levels: Climate protection will be made mandatory at all political levels, combined with sustainable procurement processes and a principle of due diligence in the use of resources.

WE ARE READY FOR MODERN INFRASTRUCTURES

Sustainable infrastructure is the key to prosperity, climate protection and social justice. It guarantees our security, our livelihoods and our freedom. Massive investments in sustainable and modern infrastructures are necessary to overcome the investment backlog of recent decades. We all benefit from a resilient economy, lower energy costs, better mobility and digital participation – both in cities and in rural areas. A modern infrastructure secures jobs, strengthens our competitiveness and creates the basis for a sustainable, climate-neutral and innovation-friendly Germany.

MASSIVE INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A GOOD FUTURE

The billion-dollar investment backlog in Germany that has existed for many years is slowing down the development of a sustainable economy and society. We therefore need decisive measures to make up for the backlog as quickly as possible and to create a modern, sustainable infrastructure. After all, we all benefit from these investments by securing prosperity, social peace and the strategic sovereignty of Germany and Europe in the long term. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Sustainable infrastructure projects: Massive investments in projects that take environmental, social and economic aspects into account are prioritised in order to strengthen competitiveness.
- Prioritisation of important areas: digitalisation, AI, research and innovation, defence, civil protection, renewable energies, charging infrastructure, grid expansion, education, transport (public transport, rail), daycare centres and the health sector (hospitals and rural areas) will receive strategic investments.
- Establishment of an infrastructure fund: An infrastructure fund will be set up to promote private investment and innovative technologies through improved framework conditions.
- Efficient financial planning: Long-term financial planning and strong financial management ensure the efficient and transparent implementation of projects.
- Corruption prevention: Independent control bodies prevent the misuse of investment funds.

- Public participation and transparency: More transparent public information and direct financial participation of the public in infrastructure projects are encouraged.
- Reducing bureaucracy: Reducing bureaucratic hurdles to facilitate citizenship projects and accelerate investment.

RENEWABLE ENERGIES, HYDROGEN AND HEAT TRANSITION FOR CLIMATE NEUTRALITY ENERGY GRIDS OF THE FUTURE

The phase-out of fossil fuels in electricity and heat generation is a decisive step towards achieving climate neutrality. Despite initial progress, further reforms are needed to accelerate the expansion of renewable energies (RE) and the heating transition. This is the only way we can all benefit from affordable and sustainably produced electricity, while at the same time ensuring security of supply. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Consistent expansion of renewable energy: In 2035, 100% of electricity demand will be covered by renewable energies throughout.
- Efficient grid expansion: A reliable legal framework and simplified planning and approval procedures ensure faster and more efficient grid expansion.
- Intelligent power grids: The complexity of regulation and technical implementation in the smart meter rollout will be significantly reduced and more focused on grid-serving effects. This will accelerate the necessary digitalization of the network and at the same time make it more cost-effective.
- Energy storage: Regulation of energy storage systems that is closely aligned with the European legal framework and the removal of economic and legal barriers to flexible battery storage systems (multi-use storage) make energy storage systems an economically attractive flexibility option.
- Photovoltaic obligation: There is a nationwide uniform obligation for PV systems on residential and non-residential buildings in new buildings and energy-efficient renovations.
- Subsidies through contracts for difference: RE plants will continue to be supported by a contract for difference model.

SOCIAL ENERGY TRANSITION

There is no alternative to the energy transition – but it is also associated with high costs, which are largely borne by the people. And this burden is not always fairly distributed. Often, it is precisely those who benefit least from the energy transition themselves who are burdened more heavily because they do not have or cannot have a PV system or heat pump. To counteract this and increase acceptance of the energy transition, reforms are therefore necessary, especially to keep energy prices low. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Reduction of electricity tax: The electricity tax will be reduced to the European minimum. In the long term, the energy tax will be abolished at the European level.
- Reform of grid charges: Grid charges will be based on causation and investments in energy infrastructure will no longer be financed exclusively by grid charges, so that charges will remain stable at a low level.
- Citizen participation: energy cooperatives, energy companies and others
Participation models are promoted in order to strengthen people's direct participation in the energy transition.

TRANSFORMATION PATH FOR GREEN HYDROGEN

Green hydrogen is a central building block in the climate-neutral energy mix of the future. This applies in particular to industries for which full electrification is out of the question. A clear and robust transformation path ensures planning security, efficient and accelerated expansion and an attractive investment environment. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Legal framework with clear objectives: A clear legal framework outlines a transformation path from gas distribution networks to hydrogen distribution networks.
- Supply of green hydrogen: A nationally and European-coordinated strategy ensures the supply of sufficient quantities of green hydrogen in the long term.

HEAT TRANSITION

The heating transition is a decisive lever for achieving climate neutrality. It enables a sustainable and affordable heat supply, reduces dependencies on fossil fuels and creates a future-proof infrastructure. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Attractive renewable heat:** Low electricity prices make renewable heat the preferred choice.
- **Speed up approval procedures:** Digitalised, greatly simplified and centralised procedures facilitate the expansion of geothermal energy and large-scale heat pumps.
- **Municipal heat planning:** Long-term financing and district heating expansion are promoted through toleration obligations and funding programmes. District cooling is privileged, as is district heating.
- **Geothermal expansion:** Acceleration areas, exploration programmes and financial support strengthen the use of geothermal energy.
- **No subsidies for "H2-ready" heating systems:** Subsidies will be discontinued because operation with green hydrogen is not realistic in the long term.
- **Waste heat from industry, data centres and waste treatment:** A legal framework will be created to systematically strengthen waste heat from industry, data centres and thermal waste treatment as a central component of a climate-neutral heating network. The connection to district and local heating networks will be simplified.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY FOR A CLIMATE-NEUTRAL FUTURE

Emissions in the transport sector must be reduced in order to preserve a future worth living for us and future generations. We need a transport policy that bundles mobility in a meaningful way, better networks it and shifts it to more environmentally friendly means of transport – for a climate-neutral future that enables independent and barrier-free mobility for everyone.

MOBILITY IN THE CITY

A fundamental reform of urban mobility is necessary to make cities more livable, environmentally friendly and safer. Fewer cars mean cleaner air, less congestion and more space for people. We all benefit from this through shorter distances, better public transport and more space for active forms of mobility such as cycling and walking. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Public transport as an alternative:** Public transport will be developed reliably, barrier-free and at close intervals.
- **Bicycle use:** Attractive, safe cycle paths, the expansion of cycle streets, parking facilities and sharing offers promote active mobility.
- **15-minute city:** Distances in daily life are to be shortened and the need for motorised traffic reduced by making it possible to reach home, work and leisure on foot.
- **Nationwide speed limits:** 120 km/h on motorways, 80 km/h on country roads and 30 km/h in built-up areas increase road safety, reduce CO₂ emissions, protect vulnerable road users and reduce noise pollution.

BEST PRACTICE

Bicycle parking garage in Utrecht – A model for parking bicycles

A bicycle parking garage with over 12,500 parking spaces has been opened in Utrecht, the largest in the world. It is located near the main train station and is characterized by modern security measures and a user-friendly design. The multi-storey car park promotes cycling and helps to relieve urban traffic by offering commuters a safe and efficient way to park their bicycles.

MOBILITY IN RURAL AREAS

Mobility in rural areas is a particular challenge that requires innovative and sustainable solutions. The aim is to maintain individual mobility and at the same time create environmentally friendly alternatives. We all benefit from flexible offers that make our everyday lives easier and promote climate-friendly transport. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Flexible public transport services: On-demand on-demand buses and close integration of local public transport with private transport strengthen sustainable mobility in rural areas.
- Integration of means of transport: Park+Ride systems and car/ridesharing link public transport and private transport.
- Charging infrastructure for electric vehicles: The expansion makes it easier to switch to climate-friendly drives.

STRENGTHENING MOBILITY BY RAIL – PASSENGER AND FREIGHT TRANSPORT

A modern and efficient rail infrastructure is central to environmentally friendly mobility. It offers us all a reliable, barrier-free alternative to cars and airplanes and enables efficient and emission-free freight transport. A strong focus on rail creates climate-friendly transport solutions for people and goods, both nationally and internationally. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Expansion of the rail network: The Deutschlandtakt as well as the expansion and modernisation of the rail network will be pushed forward.
- Deutschlandticket: The Deutschlandticket will be secured and further developed.
- Driving without a ticket will be decriminalized: The so-called fare evasion is classified as an administrative offense. In particular, custodial sentences in lieu of imprisonment will no longer be imposed.
- Abolition of the tax concession for company cars: The existing company car privilege creates incentives for the purchase of climate-damaging vehicles and also favours wealthy sections of the population in particular and will therefore be abolished.
- Restructuring of Deutsche Bahn: Network and operations are unbundled and a new federal competence center controls network development.
- European high-speed network: The development of a high-speed network and night train connections will make rail the first choice for continental transport.

- Digitization in freight transport: Digitization and automation of handling systems between road, waterway and rail creates emission-free, intelligent and efficient freight transport of the future

BEST PRACTICE

Integral timetable and concessions in Switzerland

Switzerland is considered a role model in European rail transport. This is due in no small part to the much larger investments in the railways. For the Swiss interval timetable, the Federal Office of Transport grants concessions for long-distance traffic.

POLLUTER-PAYS FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Fair financing of transport infrastructure is necessary to ensure the maintenance and expansion of sustainable mobility solutions. Those who make intensive use of transport infrastructures should make a greater contribution to maintenance and expansion, while we all benefit from a functioning, environmentally friendly transport infrastructure. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Motorway toll: Analogous to other infrastructure charges such as electricity, mobile communications or rail, those who use the motorways make a contribution through electronically collected tolls, which are based on distance and emission class. The toll applies exclusively to motorways.

BEST PRACTICE

Motorway tolls in France

France has been successfully collecting tolls on its motorways for many years. Travellers pay depending on the distance travelled. The tolls are used to maintain and expand the motorways. At the same time, the automated free-flow system enables rapid passage without waiting times at toll booths. This system represents a reliable source of financing for the motorway infrastructure and relieves the burden on the state budget.

FUTURE-PROOF DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AN INNOVATIVE NATION

A modern digital infrastructure is crucial for innovation, economic growth and social justice. Access to fast and affordable Internet access is a fundamental right that Germany, as a leading industrial nation, must actively implement. We need a nationwide fiber-optic expansion, a secure and future-proof 5G expansion, and smart cities that offer sustainable solutions and a higher quality of life. Rural regions in particular benefit from digital fairness, while a sovereign infrastructure protects personal data and reduces dependencies on foreign providers.

With an efficient, secure and equitable digital infrastructure, we are laying the foundation for a sustainable society that combines innovation and fairness.

FAST INTERNET FOR EVERYONE

An efficient digital infrastructure is essential for a sustainable society. Households and businesses benefit from fast, nationwide Internet access that lays the foundation for innovation and growth. Sustainable and secure expansion strengthens Germany's digital fairness and independence. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Accelerated expansion of fibre-optic networks: Bureaucratic hurdles will be reduced and approval procedures will be simplified. Better coordination between the federal, state and local governments guarantees rapid and sustainable expansion.
- Subsidies for rural regions: Digital fairness is ensured through targeted funding.
- Binding Internet standards: By 2030, minimum speeds for Internet connections for households and companies will be raised to at least 100 Mbit/s for download and 50 Mbit/s for upload.
- Resource efficiency through infrastructure sharing: Providers are making greater use of shared infrastructure to promote sustainability.

- Secure 5G expansion: European providers are preferred to avoid dependencies.

BEST PRACTICE

Flexible spectrum allocations in Finland – accelerated 5G roll-out

Finland is using flexible spectrum allocations to accelerate the 5G roll-out. Operators were able to start building the network quickly, which prioritized not only urban but also rural areas. This strategy ensures nationwide coverage and promotes digital equal opportunities.

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURES

The protection of critical infrastructures is crucial for the security and resilience of our society. Clear regulation and efficient coordination strengthen resilience to physical and digital threats and ensure the reliable supply of essential services to the population. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Implementation of EU Directive 2022/2555: An improved draft of the KRITIS umbrella law implements the EU Directive on the Resilience of Critical Infrastructures.
- Improvements to the KRITIS umbrella law draft: Cost-benefit assessment, definitions of responsibilities and the standardisation of reporting and security rules in the KRITIS umbrella law draft will be revised.
- Holistic process view: The integration of IT and physical security measures as well as the consideration of end-to-end processes will be given greater consideration.
- Centralized responsibility: The BSI takes over the protection of critical infrastructures.

DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY FOR AN INDEPENDENT AND COMPETITIVE EUROPE

Digital sovereignty is the key to an independent, climate-neutral and innovation-friendly economy in Germany and Europe. It creates a future-proof basis for international competition. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Promotion of domestic semiconductor manufacturers: Production capacities are strengthened by economic incentives.
- European cloud infrastructure: Projects such as IPCEI-CIS receive more government support.
- Open source solutions: Administration and public institutions rely on open technologies and standards.
- Promotion of research and development: Digital sovereignty is secured through targeted promotion of innovation.

SMART CITIES FOR A CLIMATE-NEUTRAL AND INNOVATION-FRIENDLY FUTURE

Smart cities are the key to a better quality of life, sustainability and economic innovation. Through digital solutions, we all benefit from an efficient infrastructure, a more sustainable everyday life and fair digital participation. At the same time, smart cities create a basis for new business models and strengthen Germany as a business location. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Data-based solutions: Comprehensive sensor technology collects anonymized data for sustainable urban development.
- Open source technologies: Transparency and digital participation are promoted through open systems.

***WE ARE READY TO
TO PROTECT
OUR PLANET***

The effects of the climate crisis have long been a reality. To secure a future worth living in, effective measures are needed to make our infrastructure, ecosystems and livelihoods more resilient. Forward-looking climate adaptation not only protects the environment and nature, but also people's health and safety. Through sustainable investments and nature-based solutions, such as building greening, renaturation and sponge city concepts, we strengthen cities and rural regions against extreme weather events.

Just climate adaptation ensures social justice by actively involving those affected, especially particularly vulnerable groups, and involving them in decision-making at an early stage. Capture and climate-resilient agriculture ensure the long-term protection of our resources.

These measures make Germany a pioneer in climate adaptation and create a resilient, liveable environment for future generations.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION FOR RESILIENCE

CREATING A FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Effective climate adaptation strengthens the resilience of our society and environment to the challenges of the climate crisis. We all benefit from a sustainable infrastructure, social justice and the protection of our natural resources. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Climate adaptation as a joint task: Climate adaptation will be enshrined in the Basic Law as a community task. This creates a reliable legal and financial framework for effective climate adaptation.
- Climate Adaptation Fund: A fund financed on a long-term basis from the federal budget ensures planning security for major infrastructure projects over at least 30 years, with a focus on social aspects of climate adaptation and environmental justice.
- Green-blue infrastructure: Nature-based solutions such as greening buildings and unsealing and creating infiltration and retention areas promote climate resilience and strengthen the physical and mental health of the population. The sponge city is established as a central concept for increasing urban resilience.

- Public participation and transparency: Local people, experts and associations are involved in climate adaptation measures at an early stage, accompanied by regular review and adaptation of strategies.
- Relationship prevention before behavioural prevention: Instead of behavioural prevention, the focus of regulation is on relationship prevention.

CONCRETE MEASURES FOR CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Targeted climate adaptation measures are crucial to make our society and environment more resilient to the consequences of the climate crisis. We all benefit from better protection against environmental influences, a resilient healthcare system and sustainable ecosystems. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Flood protection and renaturation: The expansion of flood protection facilities and the renaturation of riparian areas reduce risks in the event of extreme weather events.
- Resilient health system: A national strategy includes heat action plans and prevention measures against infection-related risks, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups.
- Mixed forests and biodiversity: The promotion of climate-resilient mixed forests and species-rich deciduous forests protects biodiversity and creates stable ecosystems.

PROTECTION OF WATER AS A RESOURCE FOR PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Water is our most valuable resource and essential for public supply, agriculture and biodiversity. The protection of water resources requires sustainable and innovative measures to ensure availability and quality in the face of climate change, environmental pollution and increasing demand. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- Protection against pollution: In order to reduce water pollution and ensure the quality of aquatic ecosystems, pollution from preservatives, fertilisers and industrial discharges is reduced through targeted measures, e.g. mandatory microplastic filters for washing machines and sewage treatment plants.

- **Prioritization of public water supply:** The priority of public water supply over competing uses is ensured.
- **Renewal of water infrastructure:** Investments in water supply and wastewater disposal will be significantly increased, supplemented by simplified planning procedures, tax measures and targeted support programmes to avoid rising fees.
- **Promotion of smart irrigation technologies:** A national funding program for intelligent irrigation systems in agriculture, such as drip irrigation and IoT-based solutions, reduces water consumption and increases resource efficiency.

PIONEERING WORK FOR CO² REMOVAL AND BIOLOGICAL CLIMATE PROTECTION

BIOLOGICAL CLIMATE PROTECTION: CO₂ SINKS AND STRENGTHENING BIODIVERSITY

Forests and peatlands are indispensable CO₂ sinks, habitats for countless species and natural protective mechanisms against the consequences of climate change. An ambitious programme for reforestation and sustainable forestry as well as the protection of peatlands in Germany promotes biodiversity, binds CO₂ and at the same time protects the livelihoods of future generations. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- **Ambitious reforestation targets:** At least 1 billion trees will be planted by 2035, with a focus on climate-resilient and native tree species. Monocrops are being renaturalised and degraded areas are being restored.
- **Promote sustainable forestry:** Incentives are created for near-natural forest management and certified wood production. Clear-cutting will be banned, and minimum standards for sustainable forestry will be introduced nationwide.
- **Scientific support:** A national forest monitoring system to monitor CO₂ sequestration and biodiversity will be created and research on climate-resilient tree species and reforestation methods will be promoted.
- **Education and participation of the population:** Planting campaigns and community projects are organized that actively involve local people and raise awareness of the importance of forests as CO₂ sinks and habitats.

- Expansion of peatland protection: The renaturation and rewetting of peatlands is being massively expanded in order to maintain their function as carbon sinks and avoid emissions.

CHEMICAL AND BIOTECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

The climate neutrality of manufacturing processes requires CO₂ capture (CCS) and other innovative approaches such as artificial photosynthesis. Investments in these technologies create jobs, promote the transition to industries of the future and ensure Germany's competitiveness in the long term. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Promotion of CCS/CCU technologies: Research and the development of infrastructure for CO₂ capture and use will be supported and legal clarity will be created for the use of these technologies.
- Prioritization of CCU over CCS: Processes for the direct reuse of CO₂ (CCU) are preferred to storage in the ground.
- Involvement of start-ups and energy players: Start-ups in the field of CO₂ removal will be promoted. Energy companies will be obliged to remove steadily increasing shares of their emissions from the atmosphere.
- Biotechnological solutions: Alternative approaches such as artificial photosynthesis receive targeted funding to develop innovative climate strategies.

SECURING THE FUTURE THROUGH CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Our social market economy strives for growth, which has so far meant a steadily increasing consumption of resources. However, our earth's resources are finite and the resilience of its ecosystems is limited. In order to decouple resource consumption from economic growth, comply with the Paris Climate Agreement and act in line with the EU's Green Deal, it is therefore urgently necessary to actively support the transformation to a circular economy.

CIRCULAR PRODUCTS FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Products must be designed from the outset in such a way that they are durable, repairable and recyclable. A consistent circular economy protects resources, reduces waste and promotes conscious consumption. We all benefit from more sustainable products, better repairability and a transparent supply chain. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Responsibility of manufacturing companies: Companies will be obliged to ensure the longevity and recyclability of their products.
- Right to repair: A comprehensive right to repair obliges companies to provide spare parts and repair services in a low-threshold manner.
- Conversion of business models: Business models for long-term customer loyalty, such as "product as a service", are supported by targeted funding programmes to strengthen sustainable consumption.
- Simplify third-party repairs: The availability of spare parts at reasonable prices for all repair service providers facilitates access to repair services and strengthens sustainable business models.
- Transparency through certificates and product passports: Environmental and social impacts of products and manufacturing processes are made visible through certificates and product passports to promote conscious purchasing decisions.

STRENGTHENING RECYCLING – CLOSING THE LOOP

A consistent expansion of reuse and recycling structures is essential in order to conserve resources and reduce waste. We all benefit from low-threshold return options and sustainable solutions that make the use of resources more efficient and environmentally friendly. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Expansion of deposit, loan and reusable systems: The reuse of products is promoted by the expansion of deposit, loan and reusable systems.
- Incentives for repair and resale: Economic incentives – e.g. in the context of a

reformed VAT – support business models that focus on repairing and buying and selling used products.

- **Mandatory return options:** Low-threshold collection points and deposit systems, especially for critical raw materials such as batteries, will be expanded.
- **Increase in recycling rates:** The existing collection and recycling rates will be significantly increased. For batteries, for example, the collection rate will be increased from 50% to 70% and the recycling rate from 90% to 95%.
- **Reform of waste legislation:** Waste legislation will be redesigned to facilitate reuse and recycling.

DRIVING INNOVATION FOR THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Technological innovations are the key to a resource-efficient and circular economy. Companies, especially SMEs, benefit from better framework conditions. This is because clear standards, incentives and practicable regulations are emerging. We all benefit from more sustainable products and a more efficient use of resources. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Framework conditions for technological developments:** Technological innovations and scalable applications for resource-efficient management are promoted by better framework conditions.
- **Support for SMEs:** Clear standards, workable regulations and tax incentives support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular in implementing circular processes.
- **Circularity in public procurement:** Public sector tenders include mandatory circularity requirements to promote sustainable innovation.

AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Sustainable agriculture that combines climate protection, biodiversity and animal welfare with economic efficiency is the key to a sustainable agricultural economy. Innovative

approaches are needed to shape this change together with farms.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE – FOR CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Sustainable agriculture is essential for a resilient and just society. We all benefit from safe, environmentally friendly food, while farms are supported in the long term through innovative approaches and clear standards. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Sustainable agriculture: Agricultural land is being made smaller-celled and sustainable cultivation systems (e.g. through agroforestry, catch cropping and new ecosystems such as beetle banks) are being strengthened.
- Common good premium instead of direct payments: By 2030, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will be converted from direct payments to a public service premium. This promotes, among other things, the conversion to regenerative agriculture, sustainable and/or organic food, the restoration of soil health, the reduction of pesticides, the reversal of biodiversity loss and animal welfare.
- Agriculture 4.0: Digitalisation strengthens supply chain transparency and supports the compatibility of ecological and economic goals.

STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A FUTURE WORTH LIVING IN

Effective environmental protection secures clean water, promotes biodiversity and supports climate-resilient ecosystems. We all benefit from a high quality of life, a stable environment and sustainable innovations. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Regulation of water and wastewater management: Nationwide monitoring systems ensure groundwater quality and hold polluters accountable.
- Promotion of biodiversity: A national monitoring centre and regional targets for biodiversity and climate-resilient ecosystems promote biodiversity and species diversity.

- Support for private forests: Peatland waterlogging projects and climate-resilient mixed forests are promoted, working together with private forest owners.
- Seed innovations: Small seed-producing companies and modern breeding technologies such as CRISPR/Cas are supported.

ANIMAL WELFARE IN AGRICULTURE

Higher animal welfare in agriculture is essential for sustainable and responsible agriculture. We all benefit from more transparency, better standards and ethical animal husbandry. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Improvement of husbandry conditions: Animal welfare monitoring will be consistently continued. Investments promote better standards, CO₂ stunning and tethering are replaced by animal-friendly alternatives.
- Origin labelling: Products of animal origin are given transparent attitude and origin labelling, which are supplemented by realistic images or pictograms.

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ANIMAL RIGHTS FOR AN ETHICAL SOCIETY

Dealing with animals is a mirror of our social values. Practice-oriented and sustainable animal welfare promotes animal welfare and creates awareness for respectful and responsible husbandry. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Promotion of animal-free research: The development and application of animal-free research methods is promoted. In the long term, binding targets aim to reduce animal experiments in basic research and to avoid them altogether in the future.
- Pet protection: A nationwide chip and registration obligation for dogs and cats as well as a castration obligation for free-roaming cats ensure the well-being of pets. The trade in animals that exhibit torture breeding characteristics is prohibited. Species-specific certificates of expertise for private keeping will be made mandatory.

- Stronger controls: Authorities are given better resources to effectively enforce animal welfare laws. Animal welfare organisations will be provided with extended rights of action in order to consistently prosecute animal welfare violations.
- Wildlife-free zoos: Zoos and aquariums are being transformed into animal-friendly adventure worlds. The focus is on species protection and nature awareness.

***IT'S TIME
FOR A JUST
SOCIETY***

Volt

A just society is the basis for a life that offers dignity, opportunities and security to all people. It is time to set a new course – for a society in which everyone can participate equally and in which solidarity, diversity and cohesion are the leitmotifs.

Justice begins with good work and fair wages. Everyone should be able to live well from their own work and be able to rely on an adequate pension in old age. Affordable housing is not a question of luck, but a right that we must secure – through intelligent urban planning, targeted funding and sustainable housing. We need to create a tax system based on solidarity that distributes wealth fairly and enables progress, for example through a progressive inheritance tax that finances investments in education and social infrastructure.

Education is the key to a just society. Our goal must be an education system of the future that offers every child the same opportunities, regardless of where they live. This includes the abolition of educational federalism and a national strategy for modern, digital and inclusive schools. Education must support and empower all people – from early childhood to adulthood.

A just society is also a healthy society. With a uniform, solidarity-based insurance system, we ensure that everyone has access to high-quality medical care – regardless of income. And we must create an asylum system that not only offers protection, but also promotes integration. People who seek refuge with us should have the opportunity to get involved and become part of our community.

Diversity makes us strong. A society free of discrimination is not an ideal, but a necessity. Let us work together to ensure that all people – regardless of origin, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, educational qualification or physical condition – have the same rights and opportunities. This also means promoting cultural participation, making art and culture accessible to all, and strengthening the creative richness of our society.

Now is the time for solidarity, for cohesion, for a society that leaves no one behind. The solutions are there – we just have to implement them. Together, we are creating a just society that not only works, but also offers hope and perspectives. For a country that dares to be just.

***WE ARE READY
FOR GOOD
WORK,
ADEQUATE
PENSIONS
AND
AFFORDABLE
HOUSING***

A life in security and with prospects begins with good work, a fair livelihood in old age and housing that remains affordable for everyone. In a modern working world, equal opportunities, fair wages and flexibility must go hand in hand. Reliable retirement provision gives people the security they need for their future. At the same time, affordable housing is not a luxury, but a basic prerequisite for social cohesion.

A higher minimum wage secures livelihoods and ensures adequate pension entitlements. Reforms of mini-jobs and working time regulations create more security and flexibility, while non-discriminatory structures promote equal opportunities for all. At the same time, investments in social housing and climate-friendly renovation enable affordable housing in urban and rural areas.

A fair pension system includes all working people, rewards special life achievements and creates opportunities for private provision. This ensures a stable supply of old age and strengthens the intergenerational contract. With targeted measures in work, housing and pensions, a just and sustainable society can be created in which no one is left behind. Now is the time to create framework conditions that enable all people to live in dignity.

FUTURE-PROOF AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY LABOUR MARKET

Work is not only value creation, but also identity and livelihood. A modern labour market must enable adequate work for all, guarantee social security and be non-discriminatory.

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE – WORK MUST MAKE LIFE POSSIBLE

A fair minimum wage secures livelihoods, makes work worthwhile and strengthens social security. We all benefit from fair pay, which enables both a livelihood and an adequate retirement provision for everyone. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Implementation of the EU Minimum Wage Directive: The directive is implemented nationally to guarantee fair wages for all employees.

- **Dynamic adjustment of the minimum wage:** The minimum wage will be increased to 60% of the gross median wage, which currently (as of 2024) corresponds to 14.61 euros, and will be adjusted regularly.
- **Intergenerational pension provision:** Pension contributions from minimum wage recipients will be designed in such a way that an appropriate level of intergenerational pension provision is ensured.

REFORMING MARGINAL EMPLOYMENT

The mini-job sector needs a fundamental reform in order to prevent discrimination against marginally employed persons and to avoid fragmented micro-employment relationships. We all benefit when all people in our society are fairer and better socially secure and have an easier transition to the regular labour market. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Integration into social security systems:** Marginally employed persons are integrated into social security in order to prevent disadvantages and gaps in security.
- **Facilitating the transition to the regular labour market:** Measures support the transition from marginal employment to regular employment.
- **Reduction of bureaucracy:** Administrative processes are streamlined in order to make marginal employment more efficient.

PROMOTING A NON-DISCRIMINATORY LABOUR MARKET – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

An inclusive and non-discriminatory labour market is central to social justice and equal opportunities. We all benefit from fair pay and equal opportunities for advancement, regardless of personal characteristics or backgrounds. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Equal pay for equal work:** Equal pay for comparable work is guaranteed regardless of gender or sexual identity, religion, ideology, origin or disability. Collective bargaining coverage will be strengthened.

- **Inclusive work environment:** Diversity is recognized as a strength. companies are supported in creating non-discriminatory workplaces.
- **Non-academic careers:** Access to higher-rated positions in the public sector will be linked more to proven skills and professional experience rather than formal degrees, in order to promote equal opportunity in the allocation of positions and effectively combat the shortage of skilled workers, especially in areas such as IT.

PROTECTING DIGITAL PLATFORM WORKERS

Working conditions on digital platforms must be fair and socially secured. We all benefit from equal rights, social protection and job security, while companies can rely on a level playing field. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Combating day labourers and bogus self-employment:** Measures are being taken against precarious working conditions on digital marketplaces and platforms.
- **Recognition as employees:** All employees in areas such as passenger transport and logistics are legally recognised as employees to ensure equal treatment.
- **Social protection and security:** Employee protection and social security are also guaranteed for modern employment relationships on digital platforms.

BEST PRACTICE

The Spanish Riders Law – Fair Working Conditions in the Gig Economy

Gig workers are people who perform short-term, flexible work assignments, or "gigs," rather than being in a traditional, long-term employment relationship. This innovative law in Spain protects the rights of delivery drivers in the platform economy by guaranteeing fair working conditions, transparent pay and social protection.

MODERN WORKING TIME LAW – BALANCING PROTECTION AND FLEXIBILITY

A modern working time law must ensure the protection of employees and at the same time enable flexibility for employees and companies. We all benefit from individual working time models that are better adapted to our living conditions, while companies can react flexibly to operational requirements. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Flexibilisation of working hours: The average weekly working time will be made more flexible in accordance with the EU Working Time Directive in order to enable individual working time models.
- Adjustment of rest periods: In the long term, shorter rest periods will only be possible for home office and location-independent working.
- Improved occupational health and safety: The protection of employees will be strengthened where flexibilisation has a negative impact in order to ensure fair working conditions.

PROMOTE HOME OFFICE AND LOCATION-INDEPENDENT WORKING

Location-independent working offers employees and companies more flexibility and promotes a better work-life balance. We all benefit from modern working models that take into account the reality of our lives, while companies can rely on a flexible and productive workforce. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Early determination of the place of work: The classification of an activity as a home office workplace is determined at the beginning of the employment relationship in order to create clarity for employees and employers.

- Binding home office regulations: Possibilities for working from home and location-independent work will be made binding as essential contractual conditions.

AN INTERGENERATIONAL PENSION SCHEME FOR SOLIDARITY

A fair pension system connects generations and ensures a dignified life for all people in old age. It promotes a balance between young and old, takes into account individual life achievements and guarantees financial security at retirement age. We all benefit from a stable, solidarity-based and future-proof retirement provision. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Basic income above the poverty line: an income that exceeds the poverty line is guaranteed regardless of the employment history and complements certain pension entitlements are needs-based.
- Expansion of statutory pension insurance: Civil servants, self-employed persons and freelancers will be gradually integrated into the pension system in order to ensure its stability in the long term.
- Consideration of special life achievements: Activities such as care work, voluntary services and socially valuable tasks are given greater consideration in the pension calculation.
- Options for additional provision: The purchase of pension points, company retirement provision, funded supplementary pensions and other opportunities for private asset accumulation are made possible in an uncomplicated and cost-effective manner.
- Dynamic retirement age: The retirement age will be adjusted to average life expectancy to ensure a fair relationship between the savings and payout phases.
- Education and starting budget: Young people receive information about pension entitlements and pension provision at an early stage through digital tools as well as a starting budget for birth, which creates awareness and responsibility for financial security.

STARTING BUDGET: FUNDED SUPPLEMENTARY PENSION – SECURE, FLEXIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE

A funded supplementary pension creates financial security, strengthens independence in old age and enables people to adapt their pension provision to individual phases of life. The supplementary pension makes retirement provision tangible from the very beginning. The concept strengthens personal responsibility, financial literacy and social security for all generations. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Introduction of a pension deposit:** At birth, a state-subsidized custody account with a starting budget of 1,000 euros is opened and receives annual payments of 100 euros from the state until the child reaches the age of majority. Children, parents and third parties can make additional deposits.
- **Employer contributions and personal contributions:** Employees can pay into their personal securities account during their working lives. In addition, there are employer contributions to the company pension scheme of up to 750 euros per year.
- **Sustainable investment criteria:** The Renten-Depot is linked to sustainable investment standards in order to guarantee stable returns and future-proof prospects.
- **Flexibility for life phases:** Tax-neutral withdrawals from the custody account are possible for important life phases such as studies or training.
- **Tax advantages and options:** Attractive tax incentives encourage the choice between additional pension provision or an increased payout with capital consumption.

SELF-DETERMINED PRIVATE ASSET ACCUMULATION FOR A DIGNIFIED LIFE IN OLD AGE

Self-determined private asset accumulation strengthens financial independence and, as the fourth pillar, complements the statutory, company and state-subsidised pension schemes. We all benefit from improved government framework conditions from more social mobility, participation in prosperity and effective protection against poverty in old age. Strong private wealth accumulation creates financial security and independence for all generations. The following measures promote younger people with long investment horizons in particular, enable them to climb the social ladder and relieve the burden on society. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Strengthening financial literacy: financial literacy is targeted at children, young people and adults in order to strengthen personal responsibility and competence in dealing with finances.
- Abolition of the solidarity surcharge: The solidarity surcharge will be abolished in order to allow more financial leeway for asset accumulation.
- Increase in the saver's lump sum: The tax-free allowance on capital income will be significantly increased from the age of 18 and can be carried over to future years. This makes long-term saving and investing more attractive.

ACTIVE HOUSING MARKET: EFFICIENT PROCESSES FOR NEW, NEEDS-BASED HOUSING

We need new housing that promotes our life goals and reflects our lifestyles. To do this, we need housing that is affordable, that protects the environment and the climate, and that forms the social basis for prosperity in urban and rural areas, in East and West. For a country where it is possible to live.

CREATING LIVING SPACE – AFFORDABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND FUTURE-ORIENTED

New housing must reflect people's needs and lifestyles, be affordable and at the same time protect the environment and climate. We all benefit from sustainable, diverse living concepts that promote social interaction and improve quality of life in urban and rural areas. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Conversion of vacancies: Vacant commercial buildings are converted into housing without bureaucracy. Active vacancy management as well as incentives and building bids bring vacant apartments onto the market.
- Densification and additions: Conversion, densification and extension procedures are simplified and accelerated in order to make efficient use of existing space.
- Innovative living concepts: Housing concepts that reduce land consumption per capita and strengthen social cohesion are supported in order to create sustainable and communal living spaces.

- More apartments under municipal ownership: By buying back and building new apartments by municipalities, residents benefit from long-term price stability.

ENDING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH HOUSING FIRST

Homelessness is one of the most visible forms of social exclusion and represents a societal challenge that can be solved. The Housing First strategy offers a pragmatic and effective approach to giving homeless people a stable livelihood through direct access to permanent housing. This method has proven itself internationally and shows that social integration and personal stability start with a safe home. With this strategy, we are systematically ending homelessness and creating a society that guarantees social security and dignity for all. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- Right to affordable housing: The fundamental right to adequate, affordable housing will be enshrined in the Basic Law.
- National strategy: The Housing First concept will be the central guideline of the national action plan against homelessness.
- Financing: In order to secure financing in the long term, the project-related financing of Housing-First programmes will be transferred to regular financing secured under social law.
- Promotion of new buildings and conversions: Existing properties are being converted for Housing-First purposes, and the construction of new decentralised individual apartments is being promoted.
- Adaptation of the legal framework: Tenancy law and housing subsidies will be adapted to facilitate access to permanent housing for homeless people.
- Psychosocial support: Accompanying housing assistance such as care, debt settlement and work integration are guaranteed to promote sustainable social stability.
- Monitoring and scaling: A national monitoring system will be set up to verify the effectiveness of housing-first programs and scale best practices.

CREATING FINANCIAL CONDITIONS – MAKING HOUSING AFFORDABLE AND CLIMATE-FRIENDLY

An effective funding system and targeted incentives are crucial to promote the construction of affordable and climate-friendly housing. By supporting socially oriented housing associations, we promote a sustainable basic supply of affordable housing. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Targeted support in the low-price segment: A subsidy system provides targeted support for climate-friendly housing construction in the affordable price segment.
- Support for socially oriented housing associations: Cooperatives and building cooperatives benefit from tax benefits such as reduced sales and real estate transfer taxes, special depreciation and preferential loans.
- Extension of the social bond: The social commitment for residential construction projects will be extended and economically offset by lower construction costs.

CLIMATE-NEUTRAL CONSTRUCTION – CREATING ROLE MODELS AND REDUCING ENERGY COSTS

Climate-neutral construction and renovation is essential to reduce energy costs and achieve climate targets. Through a national programme for the energy-efficient renovation of public buildings, the public sector is becoming a role model for private real estate and driving change. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Energy-efficient renovation of public buildings: A national renovation program makes the public sector a role model for climate-neutral construction and renovation.
- Serial modular construction with sustainable building materials: Where new construction is necessary, sustainable building materials such as wood, clay and recyclates are used to promote future-oriented construction methods.
- Funding for climate neutrality: Financial support is provided to implement climate-neutral measures in both new construction and renovation.
- Energy efficiency standards: Public institutions are setting new standards in energy efficiency in order to take on a pioneering role in climate protection.

SIMPLIFYING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK – FOR FASTER AND MORE EFFICIENT CONSTRUCTION

Clear and uniform standards as well as digital processes are crucial to making construction easier, faster and more reliable. By removing legal obstacles and using digitalisation as an accelerator, we promote efficient and climate-friendly construction projects. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Uniform building regulations: The alignment of state building codes facilitates construction processes and accelerates projects through clear and uniform standards.
- Reform of the parking space regulations: Fewer car parking spaces must be proven if sustainable mobility solutions are offered.
- Digital planning and approval processes: Digitization can process applications faster. This makes construction projects more efficient and transparent.
- Lean approval procedures: Improved communication with authorities and faster processes speed up planning and the start of construction.
- Digital construction: A digital ministry is developing and anchoring digital construction processes nationwide in order to modernize administration and construction projects.

***WE ARE READY
FOR MORE TAX
JUSTICE***

A fair tax system is an essential pillar for equal opportunities and social cohesion. It ensures that wealth is distributed fairly and that all people benefit from a solidarity-based distribution of the burden. Especially in the case of inheritances and gifts, a fairer structure is crucial in order to reduce extreme concentrations of wealth and promote social justice.

A future-oriented tax system creates space for social equality, strengthens SMEs and at the same time secures long-term investments in socially relevant areas. Fair regulations not only distribute the financial burden more fairly, but also support the stability of the economic system.

The reform of inheritance, gift and sales tax as well as the introduction of a solidarity-based income tax offer the opportunity to combine social security, economic stability and ecological responsibility. A modern tax system not only creates justice, but also trust in a society that is equally inclusive.

FAIRER INCOME TAX: STRENGTHEN THE MIDDLE CLASS, RELIEVE FAMILIES

A fair income tax is essential to strengthen the middle class, promote social justice and make the contribution to the common good fair. With a targeted, revenue-neutral reform, low and middle incomes can be relieved, families can be promoted and fairness can be increased. At the same time, very high incomes make a greater contribution to financing the common good through a moderate increase in the top tax rate. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- Increase in the basic tax-free allowance: The basic tax-free allowance will be moderately increased in order to noticeably relieve the burden on small and medium-sized incomes.
- Abolition of the solidarity surcharge: The solidarity surcharge will be abolished completely.
- Abolition of spousal splitting: Spousal splitting will be abolished. Instead, child benefit will be increased in order to provide targeted support for families.
- Moderate increase in the top and rich tax rate: For very high incomes, the top tax rate will be raised moderately in order to make the financing of the common good fairer.

INHERITANCES AND GIFTS – MORE JUSTICE THROUGH PROGRESSIVE TAXATION

A fairer structure of inheritance and gift tax reduces the extreme concentration of wealth and generates higher tax revenue. We all benefit from more tax justice and a fair distribution of the burden. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Cumulative taxation:** The ten-year period will be abolished, so that inheritances and gifts will be added up over time and taxed progressively. This takes into account previous transfers of assets for tax purposes and avoids tax avoidance.
- **Higher allowances for family members:** Life allowances for family members and allowances for family homes will be increased. If these allowances are exceeded, uniform tax rates apply regardless of the degree of kinship.
- **Protection of medium-sized companies:** Separate allowances and reduced tax rates apply to business assets, provided that the businesses are continued on a long-term basis. This will ensure corporate stability and jobs.
- **Abolition of previous exemption rules:** The exemption regulations for business assets will no longer apply.
- **Tax deferral option:** The possibility of deferring the tax burden for up to 10 years makes it easier for heirs to plan their liquidity.

PROGRESSIVE WEALTH TAX – FAIR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR A FAIR SOCIETY

In particular, extremely large fortunes undermine not only equal opportunities, but also the functioning of our democracy. A progressive wealth tax can address these challenges and at the same time provide additional funds to tackle key societal challenges such as climate change, education funding and social inequality. The aim is to relieve people with low and medium wealth and to take on greater responsibility for people with very large assets in accordance with the constitutional principle of "property obliges". That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Progressive tax rates:** A tax model that progressively taxes assets above high tax allowances ensures a fair balance between social justice and economic stability.
- **High allowances for assets:** A multi-digit million amount per person is considered an allowance.
- **Efficient collection:** By using existing databases and the prospective introduction of a Europe-wide asset register, the collection of wealth tax will be made efficient, transparent and future-proof.

VAT REFORM: MAKING LIFE AFFORDABLE AGAIN

Sales tax, colloquially known as VAT, is one of the most important sources of revenue for the state, but it places a disproportionate burden on low-income households in particular. A fair reform that exempts basic foodstuffs from taxes and gives tax benefits to sustainably produced and essential products creates financial relief and at the same time promotes sustainable consumption. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- **Zero tax rate on basic foodstuffs:** Basic foodstuffs such as bread, fruit and vegetables will be exempt from VAT in order to make basic supplies more affordable for everyone.
- **Clear criteria:** Clear and strict criteria for the product categories, which are based on international standards, ensure that only sustainable and essential products are covered by the reduced tax rates. This ensures fair and targeted taxation.
- **Reduced VAT rate on sustainable products, medicines and contraceptives:** The VAT rate for sustainably produced food, plant-based alternatives, baby food as well as medicines and over-the-counter contraceptives will be reduced to 7%.
- **Counter-financing through progressive inheritance tax:** The VAT reform will be refinanced in a revenue-neutral manner through a progressive structure of inheritance tax.

VISION OF A SOLIDARITY-BASED INCOME TAX – PROTECTION AGAINST POVERTY AND REDUCTION OF BUREAUCRACY

A solidarity-based income tax system based on a negative income tax secures livelihoods, reduces bureaucracy, promotes equal opportunities and strengthens social participation. We all benefit from unbureaucratic, humane basic services, while the welfare state is made more efficient. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Introduction of a basic income:** A basic income to secure a living wage will be introduced and paid out automatically and without application if there is a lack of income.
- **Negative income tax:** The basic income is designed as part of a system in which people below an income threshold receive payments instead of paying taxes.
- **Replacement of existing social benefits:** The basic income replaces existing social benefits up to the poverty line and includes child benefit in order to make the welfare state more efficient.
- **Reduction of bureaucracy:** Official processes are simplified, and specialists in the authorities can be used for more urgent tasks.
- **Promotion of social participation:** Financial security makes it easier for people at risk of poverty to return to regular employment and enables greater social integration.

***WE ARE READY
FOR THE
EDUCATION
SYSTEM OF
THE FUTURE***

Education is the crucial foundation for equal opportunities and the key to a healthy community. Even in daycare centres, children lay the foundation for their lives as responsible European fellow human beings by engaging with sport and exercise, music and art, language and diverse culture, as well as environmental issues and healthy nutrition. At school, age-appropriate and needs-based educational offers promote the social, emotional, physical and mental development of the child. There, children learn social action, helping others, a European awareness, responsibility for their environment and finally see themselves as part of society.

We must now lay the foundation for socially integrating people through education. After all, education ensures Germany's economic development of tomorrow. Qualified staff forms the foundation of good care and support for our children. Many other adjusting screws enable financial and personnel planning security and opportunities for participation regardless of the income of the parents.

On this foundation, we build the houses of vocational training, higher education and lifelong further education. Whether it is a change of career, the recognition of foreign training or the integration and participation of people with disabilities, we see lifelong learning as a social task. Only with open, European concepts for free access to education will we achieve a competent citizenry for the democracy of tomorrow.

RESTARTING EDUCATION – SETTING THE COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

All people should have equal access to education for a united, socially just, inclusive and democratic society.

LIFT THE BAN ON COOPERATION – HARMONISE EDUCATION NATIONWIDE

Uniform quality standards, efficient use of resources and faster decision-making processes are essential to ensure equal opportunities in education. Through the gradual dissolution of federalism in education, nationwide solutions can be developed and implemented. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Lifting of the ban on cooperation: The ban on cooperation between the federal and state governments in the field of education will be abolished.

- **National Education Strategy:** A uniform strategy is being developed to harmonise educational goals and standards nationwide.
- **Federal Education Commission:** A central commission will coordinate and develop education reforms at the federal level.
- **Education Council:** A committee of experts and teachers develops practical solutions to educational policy challenges.
- **Federal competence centres:** Competence centres at the federal level promote topics such as media education, artificial intelligence or economic and financial competence.
- **Reorganization of financing:** The financial responsibilities of the federal, state and local governments will be regulated in a state treaty in order to strengthen efficiency and responsibility.

FREE EDUCATION FOR MORE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTICIPATION

Education is a fundamental right that must be fully accessible to all children and young people. A free education system strengthens equal opportunities and enables participation regardless of financial background. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Free learning materials:** Learning materials are provided free of charge to school-age children nationwide and financed by federal funds.
- **Free daycare places:** From birth, day care, crèche and daycare places throughout Germany will be free of charge.
- **Free breakfast and lunch:** In all daycare centers and schools, children receive a healthy breakfast and lunch free of charge.
- **Educational excursions and exchange programmes:** The Confederation covers the costs of excursions and (international) exchange programmes in order to enable participation regardless of the parents' income.
- **Investments in educational institutions:** An investment budget promotes digitization projects and educational cooperation with extracurricular partners.

- Semester tickets and accommodation: The costs for semester tickets are covered. Reduced rents for apprentices reduce the financial burden.

BEST PRACTICE

Free Education in Sweden – A Model for Equal Opportunities

In Sweden, educational opportunities from early childhood education to university are free of charge. This creates real equality of opportunity regardless of social background. Support programs such as interest-free loans also enable low-income families to access higher education. The model reduces school drop-out rates, strengthens social cohesion and makes Sweden a pioneer in lifelong learning and economic competitiveness.

MORE INCLUSION FOR A DISCRIMINATION-FREE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Inclusion must be lived as a matter of course in our education system so that all people can learn together, regardless of individual needs or talents. Needs-oriented and non-discriminatory education strengthens equal opportunities and social cohesion. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Individual inclusion budgets: Educational institutions receive funding to implement individual solutions for inclusion.
- Special education in training: Special education modules and compulsory internships in the special education sector become part of every pedagogical training.
- More inclusion aid: Greater support for inclusion aids and professionals ensures that all children are supported according to their needs.

BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS FOR A STRONG EDUCATION

Good working conditions in the education system are crucial in order to support educational professionals in their responsibility and to offer learners the best possible support. Multi-professional and practice-oriented teams create the space that young people need to develop into engaged members of society. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Relief from teams: Teachers are supported by administrative specialists and multi-professional teams to concentrate on their core tasks.
- Free learning materials: Budgets for learning materials and a central digital material pool provide necessary resources free of charge.
- Equal treatment of salaried and civil servant teachers: Financial equality ensures fair working conditions throughout the education system.
- Flexible employment contracts: Civil servants and salaried teachers are given the opportunity to flexibly adapt their employment contracts to personal and professional needs.
- Working time accounts: Working time accounts for all teachers offer flexibility and compensation for overtime and peak workloads.
- Training budgets: Skilled workers benefit from guaranteed and mandatory financial and time budgets for regular training and further education.

STRONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH BETTER CARE

A comprehensive, child-friendly childcare service is crucial in order to offer all children equal opportunities and to ensure reliable support for parents. Uniform standards, fair working conditions and innovative concepts strengthen the quality of early childhood education and relieve the burden on educational professionals.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND IMPROVED FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS

A high-quality, nationwide childcare service is the basis for equal opportunities and healthy development for all children. Clear nationwide standards and transparent structures ensure child-friendly care and facilitate access to educational institutions, regardless of social or regional differences. From early childhood language support to better support for day care services, we must create reliable framework conditions that relieve families and support children. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Nationwide uniform childcare ratio: Childcare ratios of 1:3 for children under three years of age and 1:7.5 from three years of age as well as maximum group sizes of nine children in crèches and 15 children in daycare centers will be introduced to ensure individual and child-friendly care.
- Digital platform for allocating daycare places: A nationwide platform makes it easier to allocate daycare places, involves private institutions and childminders and clearly indicates free places.
- Strengthening day care: Shared care rooms for childminders are being promoted in order to improve the quality and availability of care.
- Nationwide language support: A nationwide educational canon for the pre-school year is being implemented, which promotes German as the language of school and bilingual care.
- Promote "family coworking spaces": Flexible workplaces are provided for parents who do not have a daycare place or who are unable to attend to childcare at short notice, so that they can work in special workspaces while specialist staff look after their children.

MULTI-PROFESSIONAL TEAMS AND TRAINING CENTERS

Early childhood education benefits from a comprehensive approach that focuses on expertise and collaboration. Multi-professional teams and specialized specialists provide individual support. Intergenerational institutions create new learning spaces. Research day-care centres promote new pedagogical research approaches. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Multi-professional teams: Teams of language teachers, speech therapists, administrative staff, volunteers, older people, volunteers and other professionals support educational professionals, improve the quality of care and create additional educational opportunities.
- Linking daycare centres, schools and housing for the elderly: Education centres that combine early childhood education, primary schools and age-appropriate housing promote intergenerational learning and cohesion.

- Research daycare centres: Cooperation between universities and daycare centres is promoted in order to develop and implement innovative approaches in early childhood education.

BEST PRACTICE | LIFE

Hamburg – A campus for all generations

LIFE Hamburg combines education, community and well-being on an innovative campus in Hamburg-Bramfeld. On 15,000 square metres, early childhood education, school, further education and age-appropriate living combine to form a place of exchange and lifelong learning. The children benefit from the experiences of older people and at the same time they avoid social isolation. This intergenerational model strengthens cohesion and sets standards for future-oriented urban development.

FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS

High-quality early childhood education needs committed professionals who can work under fair conditions. Various support programmes and financial equality make the profession more attractive and sustainable. Only through motivated and valued professionals can we guarantee high-quality care for all children. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Financial support during training: Educational professionals receive targeted financial support during their training.
- Paid observation time and health promotion: Working conditions are improved through paid time for observation and documentation as well as health promotion programs.
- Alignment of pay for teachers: The remuneration of pedagogical specialists will be aligned with that of teachers in order to value their work financially.

SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE – NEW SCHOOLS FOR GERMANY

We need a sustainable school that offers all children and young people the best possible learning environment. Our goal must be an inclusive and diverse educational landscape in which individual learning, the promotion of all talents and the free development of one's personality are the focus.

SCHOOL FOR ALL – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

A common school for all children and young people creates equal opportunities and promotes diversity. Longer joint learning strengthens social cohesion and enables fair educational success, regardless of origin or place of residence. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Abolition of tripartism:** The separation of Hauptschule, Realschule and Gymnasium will be abolished in favour of longer joint learning in order to strengthen equal opportunities and social cohesion.
- **Uniform school leaving certificates:** Uniform school leaving certificates throughout Germany guarantee fair educational success, regardless of where they live.
- **Efficient structures:** Uniform nationwide requirements will provide orientation and reduce bureaucracy in order to optimally align schools with the needs of all those involved.
- **Child- and youth-centred school:** The school is consistently geared to the needs of children and young people.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PATHS – UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

Individual learning paths and holistic development enable learners to develop freely. Project-based and cross-curricular learning strengthens cognitive, social and emotional skills and creates a flexible education system that meets the needs of all children. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Project-based learning:** Project-based and interdisciplinary teaching is promoted as a central component of the curriculum in order to strengthen social and cognitive skills.

- Cross-grade learning: Children learn with and from each other in mixed groups in order to develop individual potential.
- Individual learning paths: Curricula are adapted to the potential and strengths of each child to promote holistic development.

RETHINKING PERFORMANCE RECORDING – LEARNING DOESN'T NEED GRADES

Modern performance assessment strengthens individual learning paths and promotes the development of skills and self-reflection. Instead of rigid grading, the focus is on clear learning and competence goals as well as a variety of methods in order to create a more comprehensive picture of learning success. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Clear learning objectives: Learning and competence objectives are defined jointly by learners and teachers.
- Individual performance recording: The classic grading process will be replaced by holistic and individual performance recording.
- Diverse assessment methods: Portfolios, learning diaries, presentations and development discussions are used to record performance.
- Co-determination in evaluations: Children and adolescents are included in the evaluation processes on an equal footing in order to promote self-reflection.

MULTI-PROFESSIONAL TEAMS – STRONG SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS AND TEACHERS

Multi-professional teams create comprehensive support structures that focus on the individual needs of the learners. Teachers and specialists work closely together to enable holistic care that combines education and social support. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Specialists in schools: Specialists in psychology, school social work, school health and special education will become an integral part of the school system.
- External support: Migration officers, translators and extracurricular cooperations provide support if necessary.

- Close collaboration: Teachers and other professionals work closely together to respond individually to the needs of learners.

CONSISTENT INCLUSION – LEARNING WITHOUT BORDERS

Inclusion in schools is a central step towards creating equal opportunities and meeting the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A barrier-free school environment and needs-based offers enable all children and young people to participate in school life on an equal footing. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Accessible schools: Schools are designed to be accessible to all learners.
- Multi-professional teams for inclusion: Teams of inclusion professionals support children and young people with disabilities as needed.
- Special schools as a temporary solution: Special schools are operated in close cooperation with regular schools until the goal of "one school for all" is achieved.

EXPERIENCING DEMOCRACY – CO-DETERMINATION IN EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE

Democracy education must be actively experienced in order to make children and young people responsible members of society. With democratic structures and co-determination in everyday school life, we promote a sense of responsibility and self-activity. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Democracy as a cross-cutting issue: Democracy education is anchored in all subjects.
- Binding structures: Class councils and grassroots democratic committees promote the active participation of learners.
- Junior elections: The promotion of junior elections strengthens the understanding of democratic processes.
- Co-determination rights: Learners and parents are given the right to submit proposals to school committees in order to actively participate in the development of the school.

MEDIA EDUCATION AND DIGITAL SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE – READY FOR THE DIGITAL WORLD

Digital education is essential to prepare learners for the networked world. A focus on digital skills and modern infrastructure strengthens the future viability of schools. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Early digital education: Digital skills are taught from primary school onwards and computer science becomes a focus in all school years.
- Dagstuhl Triangle: Technology, society and application are anchored in the curriculum in order to convey digitalisation holistically.
- Parent education: Training for parents promotes an understanding of the opportunities and risks of digitalisation.
- Up-to-date infrastructure: Schools receive modern hardware and software as well as stable, fast Internet connections.
- Open source solutions and cybersecurity: The use of open source technologies and a cybersecurity concept ensure security and transparency.

BEST PRACTICE

Systematic promotion of digital skills in the UK

The UK shows how digital education can be systematically promoted: for over a decade, the curriculum has provided basic computer science skills at the beginning of the school career, including programming and HTML. In 2010, the state supported young people from low-income backgrounds with low-cost laptops and has been pursuing a digital strategy since 2017 to ensure internet access and digital skills for all. Teachers are also given targeted training.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SUPPORT – WELL-BEING AS A PREREQUISITE FOR LEARNING

Health and well-being are the basis for successful learning. A holistic approach in schools strengthens the physical and mental health of teachers and students. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **School health professionals:** Specialized professionals serve as a point of contact for health and mental health concerns.
- **Preventive care and counselling services:** Regular offers strengthen the well-being of learners and teachers.
- **Professional psychological and social support:** Specialists in psychology and social work provide support in the event of emotional and social challenges.
- **Conciliation boards:** Neutral bodies help with conflicts in the school system.

FLEXIBLE AND MODERN CURRICULA – FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Curricula must be flexible and future-oriented to prepare learners for the challenges of a changing world. They promote skills that are indispensable in modern society. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Focus on the essentials:** Curricula are reduced to the essential content and geared to the needs of the learners.
- **Competence development:** The focus is on independent knowledge acquisition, digital and social skills and health awareness.
- **Global orientation programmes:** The OECD Learning Compass and the UNESCO programme "Education for Sustainable Development" (ESD 2030) serve as guidelines for modern and future-oriented curricula.

TEACHER TRAINING – THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

Practice-oriented teacher training ensures the quality of schools and better prepares future teachers for the demands of the profession. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Linking studies and practice: Teacher training and preparatory service will be more closely interlinked.
- Dual teacher training programme: A dual system is introduced that also recognises foreign qualifications and pedagogical practice.
- Uniform standards: Study time and preparatory service are harmonized nationwide.
- Higher practical component: More practical experience in studies and preparatory service reduce excessive demands when starting a career.
- Flexible preparatory services: Practical hours can be credited to shorten the preparatory service.

BEST PRACTICE

Mentoring Program in Austria – The Induction Phase for Teachers

The induction phase supports new teachers with mentoring, reflection and targeted support to make it easier to start their careers. Experienced contact persons offer individual support in lesson design and challenges, while job shadowing, coaching and networking promote professional skills. School principals assess progress and initiate development measures. This model reduces uncertainty, strengthens the quality of teaching and increases job satisfaction.

LEAVING THE SCHOOL IN THE VILLAGE – OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL AREAS

Village schools are essential for vibrant rural regions. They strengthen the community and offer unique educational opportunities that do justice to local conditions. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Preservation of village schools: Individual, cross-grade and cross-curricular learning enables teaching in village schools even with a small number of learners.
- Digital school networks: Networking smaller schools makes more extensive learning opportunities accessible.

- Nature as a learning space: The proximity to nature is used for experiential teaching and environmental education.
- Cultural centres: Village schools serve as cultural contact points and strengthen the attractiveness of rural regions.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING – PERSPECTIVES IN ALL SITUATIONS

STRENGTHENING AND MODERNISING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Strong and modern vocational training is crucial for securing skilled workers for the future and strengthening the labour market in the long term. Trainees benefit from improved training conditions, flexible educational paths and a strong focus on digitalisation. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- National campaigns for apprenticeships: The attractiveness of apprenticeships is specifically increased through national campaigns. Especially in areas with a shortage of skilled workers such as the care professions, IT and trades, whereby a variety of approaches are also specifically used to attract men* to classic women's professions and women* to classic men's professions.
- Up-to-date training plans: Training plans are continuously updated and expanded to include digital and cross-professional skills.
- Support for small businesses: Small businesses and start-ups benefit from joint training and funding campaigns to offer apprenticeships.
- Easy transitions: The transition between training and studies is facilitated in order to make educational paths more flexible.
- Orientation offers: Job application training, workshops and internships are specifically supported to prevent youth unemployment. The Voluntary Social Year (FSJ) and the Voluntary Ecological Year (FÖJ) will be advertised more strongly.
- Platforms for networking: Educational institutions, counselling centres and companies will be networked even better via digital platforms in order to promote needs-based training planning.

- Qualification of trainers: Training strengthens the pedagogical and technical skills of trainers.

FINANCING OF STUDIES AND TRAINING

A fair education system enables all people to develop freely, regardless of their financial situation. We all benefit from lower financial burdens and fair access to training and studies. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Remuneration without risk of poverty: The training allowance is sufficient for a decent life and the state closes gaps through targeted, performance-oriented incentives, such as an orientation towards the minimum wage, in order to avoid poverty during training.
- Adjustment of BAföG rates: The rates will be adjusted to location-dependent living costs and will be granted regardless of the type of training.
- Part-time BAföG: Part-time BAföG makes it easier to finance education in special circumstances.
- Reduction of bureaucratic hurdles: The eligibility requirements will be lowered and eligibility will only be checked after disbursement in order to rule out financing gaps.
- Free training and further education: State-recognised training and further education are made possible free of charge for everyone.
- Affordable housing: Apprentices benefit from affordable housing facilities and reduced rents.
- Reform of the standard period of study: The standard period of study will be adjusted to the actual duration of study.
- Advice on education financing: Targeted counselling services help to understand and use financing opportunities.
- Lifelong career guidance: Lifelong career and continuing education guidance will be further expanded and increasingly advertised to the public in an age-neutral manner.

MOBILITY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

International mobility during training and studies promotes personal development, European cohesion and knowledge transfer. People in vocational education and training benefit from improved mobility opportunities and a stronger European education network. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Stays abroad:** Training institutions and companies are supported in enabling all apprentices to spend at least four weeks abroad during their training or studies.
- **Loss-free mobility:** Universities must specify partner universities for loss-free semesters abroad.
- **Expansion of funding programmes:** Programmes and organisations such as Erasmus+ or the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) are being expanded to create more mobility opportunities from school and youth education to vocational and higher education and adult education.
- **Transparent mobility opportunities:** Educational institutions are obliged to actively communicate mobility options.
- **Simplified visa processes:** visa procedures for non-European learners and Teachers will be accelerated and work permits will be made possible beyond the training period.
- **Equivalent educational qualifications:** Uniform qualifications throughout Europe strengthen international exchange and the simpler and faster recognition of qualifications.

STRENGTHENING OF THE NON-TENURED ACADEMIC STAFF

The non-tenured academic staff is the backbone of science and teaching. Clear career paths improve the prospects for researchers and strengthen basic research. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Tiered compensation:** Performance and experience determine compensation to promote engagement and transparency.

- Safeguarding career paths: Automatic transitions from a doctorate to a post-doc position create continuity and security for researchers.

NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR RESEARCH FUNDING

Reliable and transparent research funding promotes innovation and planning security for researchers. We all benefit from strengthened science and an open research landscape. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Basic budget for research (GBF): Researchers from the post-doc phase onwards receive a flat-rate basic budget to reduce bureaucracy and create planning security. The GBF replaces time-consuming and non-transparent application procedures.
- Networking for joint projects: 50% of one's own GBF must be distributed among other researchers. This promotes innovative ideas and networking within the research community.
- Promotion of knowledge transfer: Exchange platforms offer the opportunity to work together and present research projects. The transfer of knowledge to the population and industry is supported.

EDUCATION – FOR LIFE

Lifelong learning is essential to meet the challenges of the modern world. We all benefit from subsidised educational opportunities, barrier-free access and targeted further training in the field of lifelong learning. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Expansion of adult education centres: Digital, multilingual and hybrid teaching formats enable barrier-free access to continuing education.
- Educational Leave Act: A new law allows paid leave for further training.
- Compulsory further training for educational professionals: Educational professionals receive regular, needs-based further training, which is made possible for them in terms of time and money in order to be prepared in the best possible way for current challenges and to strengthen their important work.

- Retraining programmes: Special programmes promote career change in occupational fields with a shortage of skilled workers.
- Tailor-made further training: The long-term unemployed and people with disabilities are supported by individual training courses and wage subsidies.
- Free access to educational materials: Funded Open Educational Resource (OER) platforms provide free access to learning materials.
- Promotion of informal learning: Projects such as repair cafés, multi-generational houses and museums strengthen informal and real-life learning.

DIGITAL SKILLS AND UPSKILLING – READY FOR THE MODERN WORLD

Digitalisation is shaping all areas of life and work and making digital skills indispensable – whether at school, at work or in our private lives. Our goal must be to break down digital barriers through comprehensive training measures and to strengthen Germany's competitiveness so that no one is disadvantaged because of a lack of digital skills.

PROMOTING DIGITAL SKILLS – FOR A JUST SOCIETY

Digital skills are crucial for actively participating in the digital society and meeting the challenges of the modern world of work. We all benefit from better career prospects, while companies and administrations are relieved by digital transformation. Efficiency gains through AI and digital processes can free up urgently needed personnel resources in times of a shortage of skilled workers. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Legal anchoring: The promotion of digital skills will be enshrined in law at the federal level to ensure that it is included in the education system.
- Nationwide framework concept: The Federal Competence Center for Digital Affairs is developing a uniform concept that systematically integrates digital skills into school curricula, training, further education and retraining.

- Needs analysis with experts: Together with research institutions and specialists, the need for digital skills for the modern world of work is determined. On this basis, programmes are developed that are tailored to the requirements of the economy and provide employees with targeted qualifications.
- Support for SMEs and administrations: We support small and medium-sized enterprises as well as public administrations in their digital transformation. The aim is also to attract the necessary skilled workers.

ACCESS TO DIGITAL SKILLS AND UPSKILLING – FOR A JUST SOCIETY

Easy access to digital skills promotes equal opportunities and social cohesion. Education centres make it possible to continue one's own education and acquire digital skills. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Digital-analogue education centres: Libraries and community centres are being restructured into modern education centres that combine digital and analogue learning opportunities and offer supervised training opportunities.
- Information and orientation: To make it easier to find your way around the continuing education programme, training centres provide information on courses and opportunities to acquire digital certificates.
- Further training for employees: Subsidised further training opportunities improve career prospects and strengthen the competitiveness of employees in a digital working world.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A BETTER
HEALTHCARE
SYSTEM***

Health is the basis for a dignified life and a strong society. A solidarity-based, equitable and efficient health care system enables all people to access necessary care – regardless of income or origin. Prevention, high-quality care and a modern insurance system create the basis for a healthy life in a networked and responsible community.

The health system will become more transparent and efficient through a uniform insurance structure, fairer financing and greater citizen participation. Regionally adapted solutions and digital innovations ensure medical care both in cities and in rural areas.

Now is the time to strengthen health and prevention in the long term. Only if we consistently promote prevention and create fair working conditions and a modern structure in the health care system can we master the challenges of the future and enable everyone to enjoy a high quality of life.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM – NEW, SOLIDARITY-BASED AND EFFICIENT

A solidarity-based health system that is fairer and more efficient ensures better care and lower administrative costs. We all benefit from fair financing, greater co-determination and sustainable health services. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Common European health insurance: a common health insurance scheme is created for all, including civil servants and the self-employed
 - initially at national level, and in the long term at European level.
- Consolidation of the health insurance funds: Four nationwide health insurance funds will be created: a federal AOK, a nationwide substitute fund, a federal company health insurance fund and the Knappschaft-Bahn-See, each with branches at state or company level (BKK). The agricultural health insurance fund, the guild health insurance funds and the statutory accident insurance (employers' liability insurance associations) will be transferred to the federal health insurance funds.
- Cooperative constitution: The four health insurance funds are constituted as non-profit cooperatives, the boards of directors are dissolved.

- **Uniform representation and supervision:** The federal and state associations specific to the health insurance funds will be dissolved and transferred to the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (GKV-SV), with branches of the GKV-SV at state level. The Federal Social Security Office (BAS) supervises all health insurance funds.
- **Co-determination of the insured:** Co-determination through the acquisition of cooperative shares will replace social elections.
- **Integration of health and long-term care insurance:** Health and long-term care insurance will be merged to simplify care and administration.
- **Fairer financing:** The contribution assessment ceiling will be raised to the level of pension insurance. Socio-politically desirable services of the health insurance funds are fully financed by taxes.
- **Federal Health Commission:** The Federal Joint Committee (G-BA) will be further developed and will include all healthcare professionals on an equal footing.

***STRUCTURAL MEDICAL CARE – EFFICIENT,
REGIONAL, DIGITAL
EFFICIENT SUPPLY***

Efficient care in the health care system must avoid overcare, undersupply and incorrect care. We all benefit from fair remuneration for medical services that is based on quality and need rather than financial disincentives. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Uniform remuneration system:** Retention financing, complex and case-based flat rates as well as individual service remuneration are intelligently combined with each other in order to create fair remuneration and avoid false incentives.
- **Evidence-based services:** Non-evidence-based services such as homeopathy are excluded from statutory health insurance financing.
- **Needs-based care:** Oversupply through commercial incentives or undersupply due to shortage of appointments is combated.

REGIONAL SUPPLY PLANNING

Health care must be planned regionally and on a needs-specific basis in order to meet the different challenges in the regions. We all benefit from tailor-made solutions for our healthcare needs. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Regional planning: All necessary care services are planned regionally and according to demand. Ministries of social affairs, associations of statutory health insurance (dentist) physicians, health insurance companies and service providers work together.

PRIMARY CARE AND MULTI-PROFESSIONAL CARE IN RURAL REGIONS

Comprehensive and needs-based medical care is essential, especially in rural areas. Local people benefit from better access to multi-professional care centres and more efficient management of the health system. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Home practice-centred care (HzV): A deductible will be introduced for specialist practice visits without a referral in order to relieve the specialist practices.
- Regional care centres (RVZ): Multi-professional centres with health professions and services of general interest are being set up.
- Structural funds for hospitals: Small hospitals are being converted into RVZs and integrated into the outpatient sector.

BEST PRACTICE

Médecins Solidaires in France – Innovative healthcare in rural areas

Médecins Solidaires closes gaps in care in France's rural regions, where many people have poor access to primary care. Medical professionals take over a practice in underserved villages on a weekly rotation basis and receive accommodation, a vehicle and 1,000 euros per week. Since 2022, more than 2,500 people in need of care have been treated, and 750 have registered permanently. This model improves access to health services, strengthens social cohesion and provides a model for rural health care.

TELEMEDICINE AND MOBILE SERVICES

Telemedicine and mobile units improve medical care, especially in remote areas. We all benefit from flexible, cost-effective solutions and better access to health services. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Telemedical services: Telemedical and telepsychotherapeutic services are being expanded and integrated into RVZs.
- Mobile units ("clinic mobiles"): Mobile health units with regular consultation hours are deployed in remote areas.
- Reform of medical training: The new licensing regulations are quickly adopted in order to take greater account of primary care in training.

CONSISTENT DIGITIZATION

A standardized, digitalized healthcare system improves communication and process efficiency between all stakeholders. We all benefit from better intersectoral networking in health care. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Uniform communication standards: The introduction of consistent communication standards for the intra- and intersectoral exchange of medical data and documents is necessary (e.g. HL7/FHIR).

- Uniform documentation standards: A standardised filing structure (e.g. KDL) will be introduced as part of the ePA implementation.
- Close cooperation for cross-sectoral communication: All software manufacturers and inpatient and outpatient service providers involved in the implementation work together (via their interest groups and associations) under the leadership of gematik.

DRUG SUPPLY IN EUROPE

A safe and sustainable supply of medicines is crucial to avoid supply bottlenecks and ensure the supply of all. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Pharmaceutical production in Europe: Pharmaceutical production will be relocated back to Europe to avoid supply bottlenecks.
- Price regulation: Price differentials within Europe will be equalised to prevent drug shifts.
- Regulation of advertising and discounts: Improper consumption is avoided by targeted measures.
- Demand-based dispensing quantities: Quantities of medicines are adjusted to actual requirements in order to reduce overconsumption and environmental impact.
- New remuneration models for pharmacies: Effort-based remuneration replaces packaging-related remuneration.

REFORM OF EMERGENCY CARE – MORE EFFICIENT, SAFER AND FUTURE-PROOF

A comprehensive reform of emergency care is necessary to ensure care, overcome the shortage of skilled workers and increase the safety of those treated. We all benefit from better emergency care and more efficient processes. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Rapid adoption of the reform on emergency care: The legislative process that has begun will be prioritised and completed quickly.

- Broaden career prospects: The model courses of study for rescue personnel will be expanded and permanently established. In addition, further professional and academic training opportunities will be created.
- Rescue service as an independent service segment: This will be integrated into SGB V in order to meet the new and changed framework conditions.
- Digital networking: The emergency numbers 112 and 116117 are linked to hospitals and care levels through digital solutions.
- Nationwide teleemergency medicine: Emergency care is supported by telemedicine and thus controlled in a targeted manner.

STRENGTHENING MEDICAL HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS AND MAKING THEM FAIR

Healthcare professions, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy and obstetrics, are indispensable for health care. However, they face structural challenges. The introduction of an apprenticeship allowance, fair remuneration, better further training opportunities, co-determination and more political recognition strengthen the attractiveness of these professions. We all benefit from a sustainably secure health supply. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Nationwide standards: Uniform structures for training and further education in health care professions will be created. In addition, the training and examination regulations will be reformed and academisation will be expanded in order to strengthen research and ensure international comparability.
- Interdisciplinary learning units: Interprofessional approaches are integrated into the training of all health professions.
- Financial security: The financing of the training is based on the model of medical training.
- Socially secure employment: Permanent positions will be created for candidates for further training in inpatient facilities.
- Co-determination in the Federal Joint Committee (G-BA): Healthcare professions are given application and voting rights in the G-BA.

- Remuneration for further training places: Hospitals with training and further training places are remunerated more in order to realistically cover costs.

HEALTH THROUGH PREVENTION – A STRONG COMMUNITY

Prevention is an investment in the future and conserves resources in the long term. That is why prevention must be expanded – individually and in society as a whole. This includes minimising environmental risks such as air pollution and noise pollution, mitigating the effects of warming, and vigorously promoting research into future pandemics and European and global cooperation.

PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION IN THE AGE OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The climate crisis is the greatest threat to human health in the 21st century. Preventive measures are essential to improve quality of life and minimize heat-related health risks. We all benefit from a resilient healthcare system and sustainably designed living spaces. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Heat strategy: A data-driven heat strategy, which includes heat action plans and funding programmes, is being implemented in cooperation with the federal states.
- Urban development measures: Projects that aim to reduce inner-city temperatures will receive more support. These include greening and urban planning innovations.
- Resilient hospitals: Hospitals are being further developed with the help of concepts from the global initiative "Health Care Without Harm" to make the healthcare system more resilient.

HEALTH PROMOTION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Exercise and a healthy diet are key to prevention and health. Exercise-friendly infrastructure and access to healthy food improve the quality of life and reduce social costs. We all benefit from comprehensive health promotion services, regardless of income. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Movement-friendly infrastructures:** Suitable infrastructure projects promote safer exercise opportunities for all age groups.
- **Mass sports and clubs:** More federal funds will be made available for sports clubs and voluntary initiatives.
- **Promotion of healthy nutrition:** Access to regional and organic food is facilitated. Local agriculture is being strengthened to support this.
- **Food Compass Score:** A scientifically based rating system is introduced to facilitate healthy food choices.
- **Post-infectious diseases:** Participation for those affected by post-infectious diseases such as Long Covid, PostVac and ME/CFS is strengthened, and access to diagnostics and interdisciplinary therapy is promoted.
- **Health for all:** Gender-equitable medicine takes into account the specific needs of all genders in prevention, diagnostics and treatment in order to ensure fair and individual health care.
- **Progressive research:** Investments in innovative research strengthen prevention, diagnostics and interdisciplinary therapy options as well as the international networking of researchers.

HEALTH LITERACY – PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION

Health literacy is crucial for individual health promotion. We are anchoring the promotion of exercise and healthy nutrition with comprehensive measures to strengthen personal responsibility. We all benefit from low-threshold and inclusive offers. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Nutrition in school lessons:** Nutrition is anchored as an integral part of school curricula.
- **Counselling services:** Nationwide health kiosks will be set up to ensure individual and low-threshold counselling services.

- Multilingual mediation: Culturally sensitive and multilingual offers are created in order to reach broad target groups.
- Prevention programmes: Businesses and communities are actively integrated into prevention measures.

NEW SUGAR TAX TO HELP RELIEVE THE BURDEN ON THE HEALTH SYSTEM

Excessive sugar consumption leads to long-term health problems and rising costs in the health care system. Tax guidance creates incentives for healthier products and helps to prevent widespread diseases such as diabetes. Some of our European neighbours have already recognised and implemented this. In addition, we are following the recommendations of the WHO. We all benefit from a sustainably relieved health system and healthier food. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Tax on sugar products: Introduction of a tax on sugar, sugar substitutes and sweeteners motivated by health policy as a special consumption and steering tax.
- Incentives for healthier products: Manufacturers are motivated to reduce the sugar and sweetener content in products if they want to avoid the tax.
- Specification of the tax: The tax is 25 cents on non-alcoholic beverages with more than 3 g of sugar per 100 ml, including light and zero products as well as energy drinks.
- Expansion of taxation: Development of a comprehensive concept for concrete quantities of sugar substitutes and sweeteners as well as for the taxation of other goods and products.

BEST PRACTICE

Sugar tax in Great Britain (study by the University of Cambridge)

The sugar tax introduced in the UK in 2018 significantly reduced the sugar content of many soft drinks. Manufacturers reformulated their products, so that the proportion of beverages with more than 5 g of sugar per 100 ml fell from 49% (2015) to 15% (2019). Sugar consumption from soft drinks fell from 22 g to 12 g daily in children and from 15.3 g to 10 g in adults. In addition, the number of tooth extractions decreased

in children overall by 12.1% and obesity in girls between 10 and 11 years of age by 8%. The model shows how taxes can create incentives for healthier products.

MENTAL HEALTH – STRENGTHENING SUPPORT AND RESILIENCE

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Preventive measures and easier access to psychotherapy help to strengthen resilience and prevent mental illness at an early stage. We all benefit from better psychosocial care and less social burden. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Resilience promotion: Resilience measures are starting already at kindergarten age. This is supported by further training for teachers and specialists.
- Psychosocial services: Proactive support and prevention are provided through psychosocial services.
- Combating bullying: Awareness-raising programmes and mediation measures are being developed, in particular to de-escalate violence on social media.
- Against loneliness: Measures are taken against loneliness in society.
- Access to psychotherapy: Demand planning for psychotherapeutic professionals will be adapted to increase the number of health insurance seats and ensure better availability and fair distribution.

ADDICTION PREVENTION AND HARM REDUCTION – COMPETENCE INSTEAD OF STIGMATIZATION

Consumers benefit from education, destigmatisation, access to safe consumption opportunities and harm minimisation measures. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Safe consumption: Drug checking, consumption rooms and a wide range of substitution options are being promoted more strongly.
- Education and destigmatisation: Consumption literacy, destigmatisation of the use of psychoactive substances and community-based prevention are promoted.
- Other types of addiction: Aspects such as gambling and media consumption are increasingly taken into account in addiction prevention.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A
HUMANE
ASYLUM
SYSTEM***

Displacement and migration are central challenges of our time that require a European and national response. We must work for an asylum system that is just, based on solidarity and humane. It protects human rights, strengthens social cohesion and improves the ability of the EU and Germany to act. Respectful inclusion promotes diversity and creates opportunities for all.

Now is the time to take responsibility – for an asylum system that meets humanitarian obligations, ensures efficient procedures and strengthens social cohesion.

ASYLUM SYSTEM: EUROPEAN AND LOCAL THINKING ***A EUROPEAN ASYLUM SYSTEM – FAIR, SOLIDARY AND HUMANE***

A fair and dignified asylum system respects human rights, strengthens social cohesion and improves the EU's international reputation. We all benefit from a stable, solidarity-based Union that fulfils its humanitarian obligations. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Mandatory sea rescue service:** A Europe-wide coordinated state sea rescue service is being set up and private rescue organisations are being supported.
- **Fair distribution of asylum seekers:** The Dublin III Regulation will be abolished in favour of distribution according to criteria such as GDP, population density and overall size of a country.
- **Humane procedures:** Tightening of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) will be withdrawn and asylum procedures in camps at the external borders will be prevented.

A FAIR AND EFFICIENT ASYLUM SYSTEM FOR GERMANY

A humane and efficient asylum system reduces processing times, relieves staff resources and promotes integration. We all benefit from lower costs, greater labour market integration and a fairer society. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Free asylum counselling: Nationwide, qualified and free counselling will be introduced to accompany asylum seekers and speed up asylum procedures.
- Chambers for asylum processes: Specialised chambers at the administrative courts speed up the processing of asylum cases and make them fairer.
- Protection of those persecuted on a gender-specific basis: Those affected will be better protected, regardless of the risks posed in their country of origin.
- Climate and environmental migration: Climate and environmental reasons for fleeing are recognised in the asylum system.

RESETTLEMENT: SAFE ENTRY FOR PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE PEOPLE

A predictable and humanitarian resettlement procedure relieves the burden on the authorities, strengthens integration and does justice to Germany's international responsibility. We all benefit from orderly entry and easier integration of those in need of protection, as well as a fairer distribution of global responsibility. That's why Volt is committed to:

- Legal and safe entry: The resettlement procedure brings particularly vulnerable refugees directly and safely to Germany.
- Relief for the authorities: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) organises the main proceedings, so that German personnel resources are saved.
- Promotion of integration: Clear prospects of staying in Germany create stability and make it easier to enter society and the labour market.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE REFUGEES

The consequences of the climate crisis require solidarity-based and future-oriented solutions. Climate refugees deserve a perspective that offers them new opportunities and at the same time contributes to securing skilled workers in Germany. Germany is positioning itself as a pioneer for Europe-wide solutions in dealing with climate migration. We all benefit

from a responsible approach to global challenges and the integration of new talents into the labour market. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Climate Card and Climate Work Visa: A new residence permit for climate refugees will be introduced, based on the recommendations of the German Council of Experts on Integration and Migration.
- Targeted agreements with affected countries: Partnerships with countries such as Bangladesh enable young people to take part in a five-year programme of training and work experience in Germany.

STRENGTHENING A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES INTEGRATION

BUREAUCRACY THAT PROMOTES INTEGRATION – MAKING IT EASIER TO GET STARTED, CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

A respectful bureaucracy that promotes integration lays the foundation for a successful and humane integration process. We all benefit from a society that values diversity and promotes the potential of all. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Positive mission statement for immigration authorities: Immigration authorities are developing a renewed, inviting mission statement and will be renamed accordingly. The task of "deportations" is outsourced to the regulatory authorities.
- Sensitivity and anti-discrimination: Mandatory training for public sector employees promotes intercultural sensitivity and reduces discrimination.
- Facilitated access to the labour market: Asylum seekers will be given unrestricted access to the labour market from the time they apply for asylum.

WORK AND PROSPECTS – THE YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY FOR REJECTED ASYLUM APPLICATIONS

A humane and future-oriented migration policy gives people prospects and enables them to participate in society. The Year of Opportunity creates the basis for rejected asylum seekers to acquire a residence permit through work and commitment and to make a positive contribution to society. We all benefit from an approach that promotes integration and social acceptance. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- The year of opportunity: People with rejected asylum applications are given the opportunity to work for one year and earn the right to a residence permit through employment.
- Language and career orientation: The opportunity year begins with a two-month course on language support and career orientation. This makes it easier to enter the labour market and is also continued during the year.
- Social commitment: If a job or training is not found directly, those affected make a contribution to society during the opportunity year, e.g. in social or charitable areas. The personal life situation is taken into account in order to enable fair and balanced participation.
- Solidarity and perspective: The Year of Opportunity combines individual opportunities with a visible contribution to society. This approach promotes mutual acceptance and shows that integration is based on cooperation.

LANGUAGE EDUCATION – THE KEY TO SOCIAL COHESION

A common language is indispensable for integration and social cohesion. We all benefit from barrier-free access to language education, which is promoted from kindergarten to working life. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Free German courses: Free German courses are offered for all target groups, regardless of residence status.
- Early support: Language support begins in daycare centers and is continued throughout the school period through supportive German courses.
- In-school support: Integration specialists are deployed at schools to conduct intercultural training for teachers.
- Vocational training: German courses in professional life are promoted. A national, free language learning platform will be created for this purpose.

HUMANE DEPORTATIONS AS A LAST RESORT

Deportations are serious interventions in the lives of those affected and should only be used as a last resort. Those affected benefit from a more humane approach that takes greater account of integration and social commitment. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- No deportations in the event of integration: Persons with a job, training or study place who have not committed a criminal offence will not be deported. The same applies to people who are distinguished by exceptional social commitment.
- Protection of particularly vulnerable groups: Single women* and minors should not be deported to countries outside the EU.
- Residence status after three years: Persons who have not been deported within three years can obtain permanent residence status if they have not actively prevented deportation and have shown their willingness to participate in society through integration measures.
- Voluntary return: Voluntary return is encouraged without exerting pressure. Deportations are only the last resort.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A SOCIETY
FREE OF
DISCRIMINATION***

Diversity must be a strength of our society. Politicians must promote them and enable all people to participate fairly.

Now is the time for a society in which all people can live free of prejudice and receive equal opportunities – regardless of origin, gender identity, religion, educational attainment or other characteristics. Diversity and respect must become the basis of fair cooperation.

NO PLACE FOR RACISM – A CLEAR STATEMENT NEVER AGAIN IS NOW

Diversity is a strength of our society and fair participation is a central goal. A society that is free of prejudice offers equal opportunities to all people and strengthens its cohesion. We all benefit from respectful cooperation and more effective protection against discrimination. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Group-related enmity in criminal law: Criminal law is supplemented by characteristics of group-related enmity in order to clearly define racism and racist violence as specific legal terms.
- Non-discriminatory language in legal texts: The term "race" is replaced by non-discriminatory wording in all legal texts.
- Expansion of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency: Contact points for those affected will be expanded in order to support them more effectively, to enable faster procedures and to provide a wider range of advice and support.
- Expansion of victim counselling centres: Contact points that offer support to those affected are being promoted. At the same time, the Victims' Compensation Act is consistently applied to ensure fair solutions.
- Campaigns against antigypsyism: Specific awareness and support campaigns for Sinti* and Roma* based on the IHRA definition of antigypsyism will be promoted.
- Remembrance and responsibility: German colonial history is comprehensively reviewed in order to acknowledge historical injustices and understand their long-term effects on today's social structures.

- Restitution of looted art and property: Expropriated and looted cultural assets and assets are consistently returned. This goes hand in hand with dialogue and cooperation with those affected.

EDUCATIONAL OFFERS AGAINST RACISM – PROMOTING RESPECT, BREAKING DOWN PREJUDICES

Anti-racist education strengthens social awareness, promotes respect and helps to recognize and overcome discriminatory structures. We all benefit from a just, open society that is aware of its historical responsibility. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Protection of cultural identity: educational measures and public campaigns raise awareness of the concerns of marginalized groups.
- Education about the colonial past: German colonial history and its effects on structural racism are addressed in the curricula. This is supplemented by visits to memorial sites that promote historical awareness.
- Living culture of remembrance: Historically charged monuments and street names are reviewed and, if necessary, rededicated. At the same time, memorials are being maintained and expanded. Educational content is adapted to the current state of research in order to enable a differentiated discussion.
- Strengthening democracy projects: Initiatives such as "Live Democracy" are supported and civil society engagement is promoted. In this way, we strengthen the democratic culture in society.
- Training and quality seals: Media literacy programmes and training for employees in institutions are being developed to identify and combat discriminatory structures. A quality label "Racism-free workplace" makes exemplary institutions visible.
- Intercultural programmes: Programmes that promote cultural diversity in educational institutions and strengthen the exchange between children and young people from different backgrounds are supported.

- Teachers and professionals with diverse backgrounds: Teachers and educational professionals with diverse backgrounds are specifically supported in order to reflect and promote diversity in educational institutions.
- Early support: Children are encouraged to engage in cultural exchange through educational programmes in order to break down prejudices at an early stage and strengthen intercultural skills.

FIGHTING STRUCTURAL RACISM – STRENGTHENING TRUST, ENSURING JUSTICE

Institutions such as the police, administration and judiciary have a special responsibility for justice and security. Transparent reappraisal and targeted measures promote trust, correct mistakes and strengthen acceptance in society. We all benefit from fair and non-discriminatory treatment. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Establishment of independent control bodies: The police, administration and judiciary are monitored by independent control bodies that transparently investigate misconduct and ensure institutional responsibility.
- Mandatory training and measures: Institutions such as the police, administration and judiciary are implementing mandatory anti-racist training. In addition, technical measures such as bodycams and staff rotation are used to ensure transparency and impartiality.
- Promotion of dialogue and encounter: Spaces for encounters between the police, migrant communities and social work professionals promote exchange, break down prejudices and strengthen mutual understanding.
- Establishment of a federal network for anti-discrimination work: A nationwide network for anti-discrimination work is established that shares best practices, supports civil society organisations and systematically coordinates anti-discrimination work.
- Establishment of anti-discrimination officers: Anti-discrimination officers are contact persons for those affected in authorities and institutions and drive structural improvements.

- Strengthening whistleblower protection: Comprehensive whistleblower protection makes it possible to report grievances within state institutions securely and anonymously.

RESOLUTELY AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

DEEP-ROOTED – DISMANTLING ANTI-MUSLIM THOUGHT PATTERNS

Islamophobia is a socially profound but often insufficiently regarded problem in Europe and Germany. Almost half of the people in Germany agree with anti-Muslim statements. With over 5.5 million Muslims, who make up about 6.5% of the total population, they form the largest religious minority in Germany. Despite their central role in our society, people of Muslim faith and people perceived as such are exposed to a considerable degree of discrimination and structural disadvantage. Especially in the search for housing, in the education system and on the labor market. People who wear visible religious symbols, such as hijab, beard or kufiya, are particularly affected. Muslim women* are particularly noteworthy, as they experience gender-specific hostility in addition to Islamophobic hostility. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Nationwide action plan against Islamophobia: A comprehensive action plan bundles measures ranging from educational campaigns to support for civil society initiatives and raising awareness among institutions.
- Protecting Muslim women* from hate crime with an intersectional approach: Muslim women* are affected by multiple discriminations as they experience both Islamophobic and gender-based violence. Preventive strategies and stronger security measures are essential and help protect them.
- Strengthening dialogue programmes: Intercultural and interreligious dialogue projects are important tools for breaking down prejudices and promoting social cohesion. Their support will be expanded.
- Promote research on Islamophobia: Studies on the causes, mechanisms and effects of Islamophobia are funded throughout Germany in order to develop well-founded and effective countermeasures.

RESOLUTELY AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY – PROTECTING JEWISH LIFE

Germany bears a historical responsibility towards Jewish life due to the crimes of the Holocaust and the centuries-long discrimination against Jewish communities. Accepting this responsibility means actively combating anti-Semitism and protecting and promoting Jewish life in Germany. A society that faces up to its history and learns from it becomes fairer and stronger in dealing with diversity. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Recognition of the IHRA definition: "Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews that can be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Anti-Semitism is directed in word or deed against Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, as well as against Jewish community institutions or religious institutions."
- Protection of Jewish communities: Protection concepts for Jewish communities are developed and implemented. This includes the expansion of anti-Semitism commissioners and reporting offices.
- Against forgetting: Content on the Shoah and anti-Semitism is anchored in curricula and educational offerings.
- Against poverty of Holocaust survivors: A fund is set up to support Jewish immigrants.
- National strategy: The Federal Government's 'National Strategy against Anti-Semitism and for Jewish Life' and the 'EU Strategy for Combating Antisemitism and Promoting Jewish Life (2021-2030)' are being pushed forward.
- Strengthening the police and judiciary in dealing with anti-Semitism: The police and judiciary will be better prepared to recognise and investigate anti-Semitic incidents through targeted training and the implementation of the amended Judges' Act.

INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

It is time for a Germany in which all people can fully exercise the inalienable right to equal inclusion at eye level in social life. To do this, we need to make the social framework more

inclusive.

The expansion of social inclusion must be promoted and accessibility must be implemented consistently. This is especially true for the world of work, social life and political participation. We must not forget that disabilities are not fundamentally visible to outsiders. Such invisible disabilities also provide for special needs that must not be ignored.

WORK IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR SOCIETY

People with disabilities must have access to the primary labour market. All people must have the same conditions of employment: equal work, equal money. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Reform the compensatory levy: Employers who do not employ enough people with disabilities pay a compensatory levy that is linked to a percentage of the monthly income and size of the company. The graduation should be as follows for companies with 50 – 500 employees:
 - 40% of the average gross monthly income per unfilled compulsory job if no people with disabilities are employed.
 - 25% of the average gross monthly income per unfilled compulsory job, if up to 50% of the mandatory quota is met.
 - 10% of the average gross monthly income per unfilled compulsory job, if at least 50% of the mandatory quota is met.
 - If the mandatory quota is reached, the levy is waived.

For smaller companies with fewer than 50 employees, a sliding scale of 25% applies. 15% and 5%, while larger companies with more than 500 employees make correspondingly graduated contributions of 50%, 30% and 15%.

- Promotion of additional jobs: Additional jobs for people with disabilities beyond the mandatory quota are promoted through tax credits.

- **Abolition of workshops for people with disabilities:** Workshops (WfBM) will be abolished and converted into inclusive companies in which employee rights apply and minimum wages are paid. The companies are open to all people. The Netherlands shows that inclusion and fair pay are feasible. There, people receive the minimum wage, regardless of the type of disability. Inclusion companies work closely with municipal companies to gradually integrate people with disabilities into regular jobs.
- **Promotion of anonymised application procedures:** Anonymised application procedures are introduced and promoted in a targeted manner in order to minimise discrimination in the recruitment process and to create equal opportunities for all applicants.

SOCIAL AND SOCIETAL PARTICIPATION THROUGH AN INDEPENDENT LIFE

Self-determination and a life free of discrimination are at the heart of social participation. People with disabilities are given new opportunities to integrate and lead a life in society. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Abolition of discriminatory guardianships:** Legal support will be designed according to the model of "Supported Decision-Making (SDM)" in order to strengthen self-determination.
- **Promotion of outpatient care:** Outpatient care in one's own home is preferred over special residential facilities.
- **Accessibility in culture and sports:** Art, culture and sports facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities are funded by the state.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION THROUGH BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

Political opinion-forming and participation are the cornerstones of democracy. People with disabilities benefit from barrier-free information, election documents and polling stations. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Promotion of the European Accessibility Act:** The European Accessibility Act is being implemented more rapidly to ensure accessibility.

- Accessibility in civic education: The analogue and digital offers of the Federal Agency for Civic Education are regularly checked for accessibility.
- Uniform election documents: Election documents are provided in a uniform and easy-to-read format.
- Barrier-free polling stations: The accessibility of polling stations is defined as a mandatory criterion.

QUEER RIGHTS – EQUALITY AND PROTECTION FOR ALL

The free development of the personality, as well as equal rights in shaping one's life and the right to physical integrity are essential fundamental rights of our democratic society. These rights must also apply fully to queer people. We all benefit from an inclusive society that recognizes and protects diversity. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Anchoring in the Basic Law: Gender identity and sexual diversity are included as grounds of discrimination in Article 3 of the Basic Law.
- Introduction of co-motherhood: Co-motherhood comes into force with the birth of a child. Parenthood records can be corrected for trans*, inter*, and non-binary (TIN*) people according to their identity documents.
- Equality in reproductive measures: TIN* persons will be treated equally under the law. The costs of reproductive measures are covered by insurance companies.
- Medical and psychological care: Medical and psychological treatment services for TIN* are being expanded. The costs are covered in full by the insurance carrier.
- Conversion treatments: Conversion treatments will be completely abolished and law enforcement will be extended to persons with custody and guardianship. Conversion treatments on the basis of gender identity are also completely prohibited, and victims of these treatments are entitled to compensation.

- Education, enlightenment and research: Public education cooperations with organisations run by civil society address queer lifestyles and identities in schools and universities across disciplines. Research projects in social, psychological and medical fields will be given greater support.

EQUALITY AND SAFETY FOR WOMEN*

In Germany, the sexes are still not equal in all areas

- be it in the world of work, in politics or in everyday life. It is time to reduce existing inequalities in a targeted manner and to give women* real freedom of choice.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EQUALITY*

Gender equality is a fundamental part of a just society. Targeted support for women* in the world of work, politics and everyday life strengthens equal opportunities and social justice. We all benefit from a fairer and more balanced society. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Reform of parental allowance: The basis for calculating parental allowance will be simplified and commission models will be recognised as a salary component. The part-time parental allowance will be made more attractive and promoted.
- Paternity leave and parental leave: An eight-week paternity leave during the postpartum period and a minimum three-month parental leave per parent based on the Swedish model promote family structures based on partnerships.
- Expansion of support for single parents: The number of sick days for children will be increased to 45 working days and child sickness benefit to 100% of the lost net earnings. This creates more financial security for single parents. Special protection against dismissal, based on the existing protection against dismissal for parents on parental leave, will be introduced and thus provide social security for single parents.

FEMINISM IN POLITICS – MAKING WOMEN* VISIBLE

Political decisions must take all perspectives into account. Feminism as a guiding principle in politics strengthens democracy and ensures real equality. We all benefit from policies that are fair and inclusive. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Protection against dismissal: Improved protection against dismissal for single parents will be introduced.
- Gender budgeting: Gender-sensitive budgeting will be made mandatory at all political levels.
- Feminist mainstreaming: Gender policy effects are systematically taken into account in all laws and political measures. (Gender Impact Assessments).

HEALTH FOR ALL – CLOSING THE GENDER HEALTH GAP

Health care in Germany must do justice to all people equally. The existing gender health gap means that women* and people with other gender identities are disadvantaged – whether due to research gaps, incorrect diagnostics or insufficient access to specific therapies. We all benefit from an equitable healthcare system that recognises diversity and provides comprehensive support. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Promote research: Gender-sensitive research will be expanded and gender-specific data will be made mandatory in clinical trials.
- Medical training: Medical staff are regularly trained on gender differences, especially among marginalised groups.
- "Gender Studies" in schools and medical courses: Civil society educational initiatives on FLINTA* topics (women, lesbians, inter, non-binary, trans and agender people) in schools and medical courses are promoted.
- Prevention: Annual cancer screening and hormone screenings will be available for women* at cost price.

CLOSING THE GENDER PAY GAP AND ENSURING FAIR PAY

Reducing the gender pay gap is a key step towards social justice and equality in the world of work. Through targeted measures, we create a fair wage structure and at the same time promote family-friendly and innovative work models. With these measures, we are closing the wage gap between women* and men*, strengthening economic stability and creating a working environment that guarantees equal opportunities and social justice. That is why Volt is committed to the following future:

- Expand transparency obligations: Companies with more than 150 employees publish gender-differentiated salary data every year.
- Equal pay for equal work: Clear legal criteria for equal pay will be introduced. A supervisory body monitors the implementation and punishes violations.
- Promote family-friendliness: Company childcare will be supported by tax incentives, and flexible working time models will be expanded.
- Gender parity in management positions: Binding women* quotas of 50% on supervisory boards and management positions ensure diversity, and mentoring and further training programs specifically promote women*.
- Regional support: Expansion of childcare infrastructure and support programmes for companies in regions with a high gender pay gap improve the compatibility of work and family life.
- Abolition of spousal splitting: Individual taxation and higher child benefit replace spousal splitting and thus promote tax justice and the breaking up of outdated social structures.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE – GUARANTEEING PROTECTION AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Gender-based violence, which particularly affects women*, is a massive violation of human rights and requires decisive action. The consistent implementation of the Istanbul Convention is an important point in protecting women* from sexual harassment, abuse and violence. Those affected benefit from a strong protection system that ensures security in the analogue and digital space and supports freedom of decision. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Comprehensive protection: The number of places in women's shelters will be expanded and free access for those in need of protection will be guaranteed.
- Emergency medical care: Rape is treated as a medical emergency and anonymous 24/7 violence and forensic emergency services are introduced nationwide.
- Anonymous examinations: Uniform regulations for the anonymous preservation of evidence and free medication will be enforced.
- Protection in the digital space: Protection against gender-based violence will be extended to digital spaces, including measures against catcalling, the unsolicited sending of pornographic images, cyber harassment and revenge porn.
- Legal strengthening: Gender-based violence is consistently prosecuted and criminal liability is extended to new forms of harassment and violence.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE – PREVENTION WITH A FOCUS ON PERPETRATORS

Victim protection also includes prevention work. Gender-based violence must be fought where it arises. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Educational measures: From the sixth grade onwards, educational measures on the topic of consent and violence in schools are offered by civil organisations.
- Awareness campaigns: There are far-reaching and recurring awareness campaigns on violence prevention, consent and offers of help.
- Focus on perpetrators: The penal system focuses on perpetrators. They must complete courses in nonviolent communication and take responsibility for their behaviour.

BODY AUTONOMY – SELF-DETERMINATION AND CONTEMPORARY ENLIGHTENMENT

A modern society needs contemporary education that encompasses all aspects of sexuality, body autonomy and consensual relationship models. We all benefit from a system that strengthens self-determination and protects health rights.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In a modern society, freedom of choice over one's own reproduction is a matter of course. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Surrogacy and egg donation: Non-commercial surrogacy agreements and egg donation will be legalized.
- Sterilization: A legal regulation is introduced to ensure access to sterilizations.
- Deletion of §218 of the German Criminal Code: Abortions up to the 18th week of pregnancy will be fully decriminalised and recognised as a medical service within the framework of regular health care.
- Cost coverage by health insurance companies: All abortions are fully financed by the statutory health insurance company, regardless of the indication.
- Access to abortions: Abortions will be allowed without mandatory counseling or "reflection periods." Voluntary counselling according to personal needs remains possible.

STAR CHILDREN

Parents of star children deserve better support. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Rights: The same rights will apply to miscarriages as to stillbirths.
- Special leave: In the case of miscarriages and stillbirths, parents are granted special leave.
- Parental protection after miscarriages: Parental protection after miscarriages is guaranteed.

SEX WORK

Sex work is a legal profession and part of bodily self-determination. Acknowledging this means taking action against the existing social and state discrimination to which people working in the sex trade are often exposed. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Legal equivalence: Sex work will be put on an equal footing with other activities under labour law and remaining criminalisations will be reduced.
- Reduction of restricted areas: Restricted areas are only set up in exceptional cases.
- Voluntary health counselling: the obligation to provide health counselling will be abolished
- Health protection: Tests for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and medication for HIV prophylaxis (HIV-PreP) are provided free of charge.
- Involvement of stakeholders: Effective protection concepts are being developed together with professional associations and counselling centres (including private associations).
- Extend the protection of witnesses: Victims of human trafficking are granted residence permits, regardless of whether they are willing to testify against the perpetrators.

RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WHO USE PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

The use of psychoactive substances falls under bodily self-determination and is protected by other fundamental rights. A progressive drug policy reduces existing discrimination and avoids sanctions. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Decriminalization: The possession and use of all psychoactive substances will be decriminalized without sanction.

- Model projects: The regulated sale of individual substances that are still illegal to adults is being tested.
- Cannabis: The legalization of cannabis is maintained and it is expanded through sales and advice in specialist shops.
- Industrial hemp: The industrial use of industrial hemp is greatly simplified.
- Expansion of prevention and education: Health and youth protection are ensured through education and prevention.

***WE ARE READY
FOR A
CULTURALLY RICH
GERMANY***

Culture is the basis of a vibrant and diverse society. It shapes our identity, strengthens social cohesion and creates spaces for creativity and dialogue. To this end, it is essential to recognise the central role of the art and culture scene and to oppose any restriction on its development. A strong cultural policy ensures access, education and participation for all and promotes a fairer society.

Cultural diversity needs targeted support, innovative approaches and sustainable support. We need a cultural policy that creates spaces, promotes participation and protects cultural heritage – in both the analogue and digital worlds. Now is the time to take responsibility – for a diverse, accessible and future-oriented cultural landscape that inspires and involves all people.

CREATING AND PROTECTING CULTURAL SPACES – PRESERVING DIVERSITY, PROMOTING PARTICIPATION

The art and culture scene is indispensable for our society. Their diversity must be recognised and funding cuts must be counteracted. We all benefit from a strengthened cultural offering that promotes creativity, dialogue and social cohesion.

CULTURE FOR ALL

Broad access to culture strengthens equal opportunities and makes our society more diverse and fair. At the same time, cultural diversity strengthens exchange and dialogue in society. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Culture as a state goal: The anchoring of culture as a state goal in the Basic Law places cultural diversity and education at the centre of society and gives greater importance to cultural policy.
- Safeguarding cultural diversity: The protection and media representation of minority cultures and customs as well as monument protection are guaranteed in order to preserve cultural diversity and cultural heritage – also by supporting the independent cultural scene and its diversity.
- Ensuring equal opportunities: Cultural tickets for financially weak groups will be introduced nationwide, in combination with strengthened cooperation between social and

cultural institutions. Inclusion in culture is promoted. This is the only way to ensure equal access.

- Ensuring access to culture: In rural areas, cultural mobility is supported by mobile cultural institutions, such as culture and book buses. Municipalities are given the opportunity to buy back vacancies for cultural projects through a fund.

STRENGTHENING CULTURAL EDUCATION

Cultural education promotes creativity, cooperation and other forms of expression that are essential for our personal and social future. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Preservation of subject instruction: Subject instruction in art, music and performing arts in schools will continue to be supported in order to promote creative and cultural competences.
- Facilitation of lateral entries: The lateral entry of teachers is promoted in order to counteract the shortage of skilled workers in the field of cultural education.
- Cooperation with cultural institutions: Programmes are being created to ensure that educational institutions and cultural institutions work together more and better (e.g. within the framework of all-day schools).

PRESERVING YOUTH CULTURES

Cultural spaces for young people strengthen social cohesion and create safe places for self-development and social participation. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Promotion of cultural spaces: Clubs, studios and youth clubs are protected and specifically promoted as cultural spaces for young people.
- Extension of the Kulturpass: The Kulturpass will be extended beyond 2024 to continue to give young people access to cultural offerings.

PROMOTING CULTURE IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

The digital space has become an integral part of our culture and current events. Everyone should have access to digital art. That's why Volt is committed to:

- Preservation of digital cultural heritage: Public libraries, museums and archives receive targeted support to secure digital cultural heritage and make it accessible.
- Regulation on the right to authorship: A commission of experts clarifies and regulates the protection of authorship in the digital space, in particular with regard to AI-based technologies, with the intensive involvement of cultural professionals.

SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR CULTURAL WORKERS

Fair pay and social security for cultural workers secure the cultural offer in the long term. We all benefit from a diverse art and culture scene that is based on stable career prospects. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Introduction of a basic fee: Solo self-employed cultural workers will receive a basic fee for public contracts in order to strengthen their economic security and counteract bogus self-employment.
- Strengthening social security for artists: The contribution rate will remain at 5%, while the federal subsidy will be increased to 25% to ensure sustainable coverage.
- Facilitated access to unemployment insurance: Barriers to voluntary admission to unemployment insurance will be removed.

FINANCING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

To finance this, the cultural budgets of the federal, state and local governments are to be kept at least up to date and increased in line with needs in the long term. We all benefit from a rich cultural life in town and country. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Safeguarding cultural budgets: The cultural budgets of the federal, state and local governments will remain at least up to date and, if necessary, will be increased in line with needs in the long term. The Federal Cultural Fund is used for financing.
- Earmarked tourism taxes: Revenues from tourism taxes are used to preserve cultural diversity and heritage.

MEDIA AS PROTECTION OF OUR DEMOCRACY

Disinformation is steadily increasing, populism is gaining strength and extremist ideas are germinating again. Therefore, the promotion and maintenance of a pluralistic and independent media landscape is indispensable. The media landscape is one of the pillars of a functioning democracy. It promotes pragmatic and constructive political and social dialogue in its role as the fourth estate. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Competence Centre for Media Education and Journalism Consulting (KzfMuJ): As a central body, the KzfMuJ strengthens society's media literacy and supports media professionals. It offers training on cybersecurity, legal advice and protective measures against surveillance and threats.
- Protection and promotion of journalism: The legal basis and safety programs will be improved to protect media workers and their families from danger. Training for the police is intended to ensure the protection of the press during demonstrations. Funding programmes and scholarships are diversified and geared particularly towards structurally weak regions.
- Progressive media funding: Local newspapers are supported by targeted funding to strengthen regional issues. The reform of non-profit law makes it possible to provide financial security for non-profit journalism.
- Inclusive access to journalism: Media offerings are designed to be inclusive and advertised by the KzfMuJ.
- Reform of public service media: A citizens' council is helping to shape the reform of public service media in order to adapt the services to the needs of today's users and to take greater account of marginalised groups.

- Independent European media: An independent European public service broadcaster strengthens the European perspective in the media and makes EU issues visible.

SPORT AS THE KEY TO HEALTH, COMMUNITY AND SUCCESS

Sport plays a central role in health, social coexistence and individual development. Nevertheless, there are challenges in Germany such as insufficient funding for grassroots sports clubs, hurdles in inclusive sport and a fragmented system of competitive sports funding. That is why we need a comprehensive sports strategy that combines sustainable health promotion, social integration and the support of sporting ambitions.

PROMOTING POPULAR SPORT AND CLUB CULTURE

Mass sports and local clubs form an important part of our society. They promote community and enable exercise for all. A strong club landscape strengthens social integration, conveys team spirit and makes sports activities accessible to people of all ages. We all benefit from affordable, barrier-free and versatile sports facilities directly on site. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Promotion of sports clubs: Local clubs are financially supported in order to modernise their offerings and reach as many people as possible – from the young to the elderly.
- Inclusive sports facilities: Sports facilities will be made barrier-free and special support programmes for people with disabilities will be set up to enable everyone to participate on an equal footing.
- Membership recruitment: National campaigns are intended to attract new association members, especially among children, young people and socially disadvantaged groups.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE SPORTS

Competitive sports promote special sporting talents and create the basis for a later career path. Competitive athletes also represent us at sporting events abroad and they have a special responsibility as ambassadors of Germany and Europe. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Reform of the funding system:** The planned Sports Promotion Act will be implemented consistently. The envisaged top-level sports agency will be expanded into the central independent authority for efficient, transparent and sustainable funding allocation. Flexible funding structures are to meet the dynamic requirements of top-class sport.
- **Promotion of dual careers:** A mandatory model will be introduced for competitive athletes that offers career prospects to ensure their financial security and future.
- **Diversity in competitive sports:** Targeted programmes reach more young talent from different social and ethnic backgrounds.

PROMOTING HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR ALL

Regular exercise is the key to a healthy life and prevents lifestyle diseases. Nevertheless, many people are not active enough in their everyday lives. We all benefit from better health promotion services in schools, at work and in our free time. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- **Daily exercise in schools:** A daily exercise programme that includes both team and individual sports will be introduced. This offer goes beyond regular physical education. It promotes the motor development of children and adolescents and conveys the joy of movement as well as important social skills such as team spirit and fair play.
- **Municipal prevention programs:** Free sports and exercise programs for adults are organized by municipalities to make health benefits accessible to all.

- Expansion and standardisation of health insurance bonus programmes: Standardised and more attractive bonus systems that include club memberships, municipal sports programmes and digital solutions such as apps and wearables in addition to fitness courses are being promoted. Stronger incentives and easier handling are intended to motivate more people to exercise regularly.

MODERNISING SPORT THROUGH DIGITALISATION

Digitalisation offers a unique opportunity to make sports more accessible and to reach new target groups. We all benefit from low-threshold, innovative solutions that combine movement and technology. That's why Volt is committed to this future:

- Digital platform for sports activities: A nationwide platform will be set up that will connect sports clubs, instructors and sports enthusiasts in order to make offers even more available and diverse.
- Technology to promote physical activity: Wearables and apps will be integrated into national exercise programmes to motivate young people and tech-savvy target groups in particular to take up more sporting activity.



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