

# Wolke

**New Politics.  
New Europe.**

**OUR PROGRAMME FOR THE  
BUNDESTAG ELECTION 2021.**

*BRIEF VERSION*

OUR  
FUTURE.  
MADE IN  
EUROPE.



**OUR**

**FUTURE.**

**MADE IN**

**EUROPE.**

**We are Volt.** We exist because we are convinced that the major challenges of the 21st century can only be solved if Europe acts in unity. In a Europe where all people have equal opportunities to live up to their full potential. A Europe that strives for the highest standards of human, social, ecological and technological development.

We advocate for this on all levels and are already represented in the European and Dutch parliaments as well as in several cities and municipalities across Europe. In combination with our European manifesto, this is what makes us the first truly pan-European party.

National parties and national policies are reaching their limits in the search for solutions to the global challenges of our time. Volt is convinced that **Germany needs Europe and Europe needs Germany**. The future of the EU is also closely linked to the Bundestag elections. As it is the national governments that decide on the future direction of the EU in the EU Council - the EU Parliament itself is not yet allowed to propose new legislations. Therefore Volt is also needed in Germany.

### **Why us? Why now?**

Volt represents new politics that work together across borders and oppose nationalism and populism.

We demand a reformed EU that represents its citizens. We are facing three major challenges: the environmental crisis, social disintegration and the ramifications of the COVID 19 pandemic. There is no better time than right now to establish a new solution-oriented political force like Volt. Thus, the 2021 federal election is a unique opportunity to initiate a holistic transformation that reshapes Germany and the entirety of Europe.

Volt is contesting the 2021 Bundestag elections with this programme. We want to tackle the big problems of our time in a pragmatic and progressive way and become the voice of European unification in the Bundestag.

**EUROPEAN.**

**DEMOCRATIC.**

**ACTIVE.**

A unified Europe with a true parliamentary democracy, in which not individual heads of state and government decide about a shared future, but the directly elected parliament of all Europeans - and in the long term a sovereign federal European republic.

**CLIMATE NEUTRAL.**

**ENTREPRENEURIAL.**

**DIGITAL.**

A sustainable and intergenerational market economy that views decarbonisation, entrepreneurship and digitalisation as an opportunity instead of an obstacle.

Politics that promote structural and technological innovations and improve the lives of all people on a socially acceptable foundation. We will make Germany CO2-neutral by 2035 and climate-neutral by 2040. With a self-determined digital transformation that opens opportunities for everyone.

**SELF-DETERMINED.**

**SOLIDARY.**

**INCLUSIVE.**

A society in which everyone can participate and lead a healthy life.

A community that provides education, a resilient healthcare system and financial aid, in order to give support in difficult circumstances.

A society with strong social cohesion in order to face the challenges of today and tomorrow, both in urban and rural areas.

A society in which diversity is being recognised as the normality.

Where discrimination is being combated and equal opportunities and participation for everyone are vital.

## #1 OUR FUTURE

EUROPEAN.

DEMOCRATIC.

ACTIVE.

### **One Europe with one Democracy**

- › Vision of Europe
- › Reform of Institutions
- › Elections and Electoral Law

### **Strengthening European Cooperation**

- › Financial Markets and Coordinated Tax Policies
- › Common Internal Security
- › Common Migration and Asylum Policy
- › Value-orientated Development and Trade Policy
- › Climate Diplomacy
- › Common Foreign and Defense Policy
- › Common Promotion of Research and Development
- › Common Health Policy

### **Strengthening Democracy in Germany and Europe**

- › Rule of Law and the Public Sphere
- › Individual Freedom and Rights
- › Protection of a Free Democracy
- › Citizen Participation

## #2 OUR FUTURE

**CLIMATE NEUTRAL.**

**ENTREPRENEURIAL.**

**DIGITAL.**

**A Social and Liberal Economic Policy that Provides Opportunities**

- Businesses and Entrepreneurship
- Promotion of Investment
- Budgetary and Tax Policy

**The Transformation Towards Climate Neutrality**

- Energy Transition
- Building and Housing
- Industry
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Mobility Transition
- Circular Economy
- Negative Emissions
- CO<sub>2</sub> Pricing

**Digital Transformation**

- A Better Functioning, Smarter State
- Digital Economy
- Artificial Intelligence

**A New Start for Education**

- Early Childhood Education
- School of the Future
- Reform of Education Policy
- Further Training, Higher Education and Vocational Training

**Strengthening Social Protection and Opportunities**

- Social Protection
- Social Mobility
- New Work Environments

**A Resilient Health System**

- Healthcare and Services
- Promoting Preventive Healthcare
- Healthcare Profession

**Progressive Migration Policy and Inclusion**

- Immigration
- Enabling and Humanising Asylum
- Participation Opportunities for Refugees and Migrants

**Actively Combating Discrimination**

- Direct Support for Those Affected
- Discrimination Against Women
- Discrimination Against Queer People
- Discrimination Against Disabled People
- Racism
- Anti-Semitism

**SELF-DETERMINED.**

**SOLIDARY.**

**INCLUSIVE.**

## #3 OUR FUTURE

OUR  
FUTURE  
EUROPEAN.  
DEMOCRATIC.  
ACTIVE.

## ONE EUROPE WITH ONE DEMOCRACY.

The European Union (EU) is and remains a magnificent peace project - but it is more than just that. And it is definitely more than just a market! Fair and sustainable trade, climate protection, social equality, self-determined digitalisation and migration are challenges that we can better solve together.

The idea of Europe is the idea of solidarity and shared values: respect for human dignity, freedom and democracy, equality, the rule of law and for human rights. We want the EU to meet these demands! In today's EU, national interests undermine the common goals of all member states and the values of the EU. National parties are reaching their limits. The challenges of the future demand political structures that transcend borders.

To this end, the EU must be reformed because the future lies in a federal Europe with a parliamentary democracy that is built and shaped by and through its citizens.

## VISION OF EUROPE

### > **Federal European Republic.**

Volt's long-term vision is a federal, united Europe with a common European government based on a European Constitution legitimised by European citizens. We are committed to this vision with a European programme at all levels and in all countries of Europe.

## REFORM OF INSTITUTIONS

> **Majority decisions in the EU-Council instead of national blockades.** At present, unanimity is required for decisions in the Council on some important issues, which leads to blockades by individual states and makes joint action more difficult. In order to improve the EU's ability to act, decisions should in principle be taken by majority vote in the future.

> **Right of initiative for the European Parliament.** As the only directly elected EU institution, the European Parliament must be allowed to introduce legislative initiatives into the law-making process. Thus, the interests of citizens can be better represented at the European level.

> **Reforming the European Commission.** In future, the President of the Commission should be proposed and elected by the European Parliament, and the other members should be appointed according to suitability and competence and not (as is currently the case) according to national proportional representation. This should increase the democratic legitimacy of the institution and guarantee professional expertise.

## ELECTIONS AND

## ELECTORAL LAW

> **Common European electoral law.** We advocate for a uniform European electoral law based on a two-vote electoral system:

one vote for direct candidates and the other for the list of a European political party. The interests of the member states are represented by a second chamber, the 'upper house', whose representatives are elected by the parliaments or by the citizens of the member states.

### > **Establishing true European parties.**

The current EU parties are loose coalitions of national parties, often pursuing conflicting interests. We call for European electoral lists and uniform taxation and financing of parties through an EU Party Regulation Act.

> **Extension of the right to vote and stand for election.** In order to improve democratic decision-making and increase the representativeness of the institutions, citizens from the age of 16 and EU citizens living in Germany should be allowed to vote and stand for election.

> **Promoting the political participation of people with disabilities,** especially in the formation of political will, the right to vote and the holding of political office. Existing barriers and stigmatisation are to be overcome.

## STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN COLLABORATION

The Corona pandemic has shown that problems and crises do not stop at national borders. Not only does a strong Europe need a reform of political institutions, but also a **strengthening of European collaboration**.

We Europeans face many similar problems that could be better addressed across countries by working together, coordinating and finding common solutions in different policy areas - be it health, trade, climate, migration, defence, domestic and foreign policy and finance.

We do not see ourselves in competition with other member states, but as part of Europe. Strengthening European collaboration provides the basic conditions for solving many of the problems we want to tackle, and accordingly runs through our entire programme. It is at the core of our cooperation in parliaments at all levels in Europe.

## FINANCIAL MARKETS AND COORDINATED TAX POLICY

- **Creation of a financially independent European Ministry of Finance and Economy** by increasing its own resources as well as long-term fiscal sovereignty. The basis for this is a clear joint coordination of European financial, economic and fiscal policy.
- **Introduction of a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB):** According to this, a total profit is calculated for concerns based in the EU and allocated to the member states for taxation in equal parts according to the criteria of payroll, capital employed and turnover.
- **Introduction of an EU-wide financial transaction tax** on derivatives, financial market betting and securities.
- **Ensure fair taxation of multinational companies.** The prerequisite for this is a uniform minimum corporate tax of 15% and a consistent crackdown on tax havens, also in Europe.
- **European taxation of digital companies** based on new models that are up-to-date for the digital economy, such as taxation on a turnover basis in the country of revenue generation.

## COMMON INTERNAL SECURITY

- **Developing Europol into a fully-fledged European Criminal Police**, which can, in particular, act in the areas of organised crime, counter-terrorism, money laundering and cybercrime.
- **Abolition of stationary internal border controls within the Schengen area.** Suspicion-based spot checks will be

carried out independently from today's borders.

- **Establishment of European border protection as an exclusive EU task** through an authority that is controlled by the Parliament and whose structures are particularly oriented towards the preservation of human rights and international and European legislation. Frontex as well as all existing national border guards are to be merged into this new organisation.

## COMMON MIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICY

- **Implement a joint and efficient European asylum system** that safeguards human rights in order to alleviate the current systematic suffering at the external borders. In addition to the voluntary admission of refugees, we want to establish a distribution key based on population size, population density, wealth, age and economic growth in the receiving country.
- **Large collective camps in which people are accommodated on a long-term basis are to be abolished.** Instead, there will be decentralised accommodation. Overcrowded camps at the external borders can be relieved by giving municipalities the right to take in refugees without the federal government having to agree.

- **Ensure decriminalisation and legal protection of sea rescue.** Fundamental to this is the creation of a European sea rescue organisation that is not responsible for border protection and does not pursue military objectives. Sea rescue ships will not be prevented from leaving port, but will be secured when docking. In addition, illegal push-backs must be stopped and penalised.

## VALUE-BASED DEVELOPMENT

## AND TRADE POLICY

- > **Establish a rules-based, climate-friendly, sustainable and fair global trading system** through strong international institutions (in particular an effective and more democratic World Trade Organisation) and the signing of fair, values-driven and climate-protective trade agreements.
- > **Establish a European supply chain law** that obliges companies to comply with human rights and environmental standards along their entire supply chain.
- > **Revise EU agricultural subsidies** to prevent distortions of competition in trade. Those that distort trade to the detriment of countries of the Global South should be abolished if necessary. Furthermore, the room for manoeuvre of these countries for strategic industrial policy and (short-term) protectionist measures must be preserved.
- > **Strengthening local and regional trade with countries of the Global South** and increasing imports from these countries according to the motto „Trade over Aid“. Reforms should be oriented towards the well-being of the local population and not perpetuate unequal dependencies. In addition, start-up aid for entrepreneurs should be made possible through access to patents, expansion of the digital infrastructure and prioritisation of industrial locations in structurally disadvantaged cities.
- > **Combat structural discrimination against workers in development cooperation.** Among other things, leadership positions in international organisations should be created for this purpose.

## CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

- > **Establishment of a European climate diplomacy group** to strengthen the EU's climate diplomacy efforts. This is to be supported by the Common Foreign and

Security Policy and the Directorate General.

- > **A joint withdrawal of all European countries from the Energy Charter Treaty**, which today can be misused to delay the energy transition through investment arbitration proceedings. At the same time, a so-called Inter-Se Agreement is to be concluded. Countries outside the EU should also join this agreement.
- > **Creation of an agency for climate protection and energy transition** controlled by the European Parliament. CAETA is to coordinate a climate protection network, ensure the financing of the energy transition and support the efforts of the Climate Diplomacy Group.

## COMMON FOREIGN AND DEFENCE POLICY

- > **Creating a coherent foreign policy** that does not place profit above values and acts in concert. By introducing majority voting in the Council of the EU, the EU should become more capable of acting, especially towards autocratic models of society that systematically disregard human rights.
- > **Democratisation of the United Nations** by establishing a world parliament with directly elected representatives alongside the General Assembly. In addition, a fundamental reform of the UN Security Council is necessary in order to abolish the veto power and permanent memberships. The entire EU should be represented at the UN by only one EU ambassador.
- > **Create a European Defence Army under parliamentary control** with a European Defence Minister to enable a self-determined defence in addition to NATO and to reduce national defence expenditure in total through uniform and more efficient equipment.

## JOINT PROMOTION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

> **Promote research, especially for the introduction of new technologies for the market-based use of new products and services.** A European agency for advanced research should be created to set up and manage the harmonisation of various funding programmes (e.g. EIC or SPRIN-D) at the European level in one agency.

> **Promote open standards and Free and Open Source Software (FLOSS)** by establishing a politically independent, state-financed fund at the German and the European level. This should ensure that open technologies and standards, which are essential for the internet, our digital infrastructure and civil society, are further developed in the long term.

> **Increasing Europe's investment in space.** The most important goals include the improvement of Earth observation and the use of the information gained from this for the preservation of our livelihoods, the development of space-based energy sources - such as solar energy and nuclear fusion - and the mining of valuable matter. In addition, there is a need to implement a space law that ensures that the use of the opportunities and resources of outer space is oriented towards the common good of humankind.

## JOINT HEALTH POLICY

> **Strengthening cross-border cooperation in health emergencies,** among other things through joint storage of medical equipment to prevent supply shortages. In addition, a European supply register of free hospital capacities and a Europe-wide warning system for disasters and health emergencies are to be established.

> **Strengthening the coordination of the joint health policy,** unter anderem durch eine europäische Präventionsstrategie zur Gesundheitserhaltung und eine europäische digitale Infrastruktur im Gesundheitswesen, welche die länderübergreifende Versorgung von Patient\*innen ermöglicht.

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## STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY IN GERMANY AND EUROPE

Fundamental to institutional reform and strengthened cooperation is a strong democracy. For a democracy to function, it requires both a transparent state committed to the rule of law and effective citizens' rights as well as active citizens' participation and democratic involvement.

We want to **strengthen democracy in Germany and Europe** so that a European will can develop and Europe can be shaped and developed by its citizens.

## RULE OF LAW, TRANSPARENCY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

- > **Strengthen the rule of law of EU states** by tightening and improving the rule of law mechanism for EU funds. In addition, more competences are needed for the European Public Prosecutor's Office and for the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).
- > **Strengthen the primacy of EU law and EU case law over national law and the judiciary.** Enable individual fundamental rights actions before the European courts for all EU citizens to effectively enforce the rule of law culture.
- > **Increasing the transparency of the EU institutions,** especially in the Council of the EU and in the informal trilogue between the Commission, the Council and the Parliament. In addition, a voluntary commitment to disclose all lobbying contacts applies.
- > **Creating a pan-European media landscape,** in particular through the establishment of a European public broadcasting and media authority.

## INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS

- > **Create a digital charter of fundamental rights at European level** to safeguard the fundamental rights of all citizens in the digital space.
- > **Protect fundamental rights** by, among other things, temporarily stopping the passing of further security laws. Instead, the current extent of state interference with fundamental rights should be transparently reviewed. Disproportionate powers should be revoked.
- > **Combat hate and fake news** by esta-

blishing a public counselling and clearing centre. In addition, there is a need for a renewed examination of the NetzDG, the simplification of the preservation of evidence for those affected, transparency requirements for smaller operators and the possibility of sanctioning (blocking/deleting) accounts.

- > **Prohibition of real-time identification of persons in public spaces,** e.g. through facial recognition software or gait recognition. Among other things, a review of this ban for companies and private individuals is crucial.
- > **Securing the population and the economy from digital attacks** through targeted awareness programmes and the creation of a right to encryption.

## PROTECTION OF THE FREE DEMOCRATIC BASIC ORDER

- > **Consistent clarification and combating of extremist structures of all kinds.** To this end, among other things, the offices for the protection of the constitution at federal and state level are to be expanded. This must go hand in hand with better detection and significantly stricter punishment of discriminatory and racist structures within the security authorities.
- > **Strengthening the protection of institutions and people** who are under a proven threat of extremism. At the same time, more raids are to be used to disarm extremist structures. In addition, exit counselling should be permanently financed and supported.
- > **Promote educational programmes in schools** to make pupils less susceptible to extremist influences. In addition, teachers should be able to recognise radicalisation at an early stage through appropriate training.

## CITIZEN

## PARTICIPATION

- **Strengthen political participation and the European public sphere** through citizens' councils and citizens' assemblies. In this way, the population can comment on draft legislation, participate in political decisions and actively shape their society.
  - **Strengthening a culture of participation in the legislative process** by establishing an online participation portal, a public comment phase for draft laws of the federal ministries and a timely processing of petitions by the Bundestag.
  - **Strengthening the political participation of young people** by creating a specially funded petition process for people aged between 12 and 20.
  - **Introduction of nationwide municipal citizens' budgets** so that citizens can actively participate in shaping policy. The citizens' budgets should comprise a percentage of the respective budget, but at least 1 euro per citizen.
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**SOCIAL AND LIBERAL  
ECONOMIC POLICY  
THAT CREATES OPPORTUNITIES**

Volt stands for a strong and ecologically, socially and economically sustainable market economy. Our challenges such as the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, an administration in need of reform as well as education and health systems, digitalisation and the consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic can only be solved together. We want to create a framework that will bring about positive change, new jobs and entrepreneurship. We want to set framework conditions that allow for positive change, new jobs and entrepreneurship to emerge and not be slowed down by bureaucracy, inefficient structures and insufficient funding. Germany needs a long-term economic and financial policy that enables companies to actively shape the future. Public funds should be used efficiently and purposefully in order to multiply private investments, to enable necessary adjustments by companies and to create new entrepreneurial opportunities.

## BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- > **General simplification of setting up and running a business** by reducing bureaucratic hurdles through digitised processes. Especially in times of change, start-ups play an important role in creating jobs and addressing our challenges.
- > **Introducing a new legal form that enables long-term asset retention in responsibly owned enterprises**, also to promote purpose-owned enterprises. This means that company ownership is no longer defined as an individual asset, but as an obligation to assume individual responsibility via employee-related voting rights in the sense of the future viability of the company.
- > **Strict separation of auditing and consulting** in order to avoid conflicts of interest, to create a level playing field and an independent audit for companies.
- > **Abolition of the trade tax** with compensation for the loss of revenue for the municipalities. We thereby reduce complexity and increase transparency and traceability in tax burdens on the corporate side.
- > **Reform of corporate taxes on profits** through a moderate reduction of corporate tax rates in Germany towards a medium European level.

## PROMOTING INVESTMENT

- > **Promotion of private investment and equity capital** and access to public funding for young innovative companies. Through public participation in private investment and equity capital providers (venture capital funds, private equity funds), the state exerts a direct positive influence on the capital resources of

investors who are established and networked in the market.

- > **Adjustment of public regulations for insurance companies and pension funds** in order to increase venture capital investments, e.g. in green technologies. Public guarantees cover part of the default risk.
- > **Strengthening employee share ownership plans (ESOP)**, in particular by consistently revising the draft of the Fund Location Act and adapting the proposals to the corporate reality of many employees in start-ups.

## BUDGETARY AND FISCAL POLICY

- > **Investments in climate neutrality and digital transformation must be made within the framework of a responsible budgetary policy** in order to manage and prevent future crises that are already foreseeable today.
- > **The use of taxpayers' money for the economy must be fundamentally revised** towards a science-based and transparent economic policy.
- > **Subsidies must be regularly reviewed for their efficiency and target orientation.** The ministries in particular have a responsibility to invest the available funds on the basis of clear goals and necessary reforms.
- > **The debt cap should be temporarily suspended** in order to create the necessary financial room for manoeuvre for investments in the prevention of climate change and promotion of digitalisation.

## TRANSFORMATION TO CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

The climate crisis is a matter of justice within and between societies, as well as between generations. It is the most prominent example of how our way of life is exceeding the planetary boundaries of Earth. The challenges could not be greater: The global CO<sub>2</sub> budget for limiting global warming to a maximum of 1.5 °C will be exhausted in six and a half years; Germany's CO<sub>2</sub> budget, assuming no change in emissions, will already be exhausted in 2023. Meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement is becoming a distant prospect. Yet we are taking on this task! We are convinced that only a new, holistic approach will make the triad of climate change, economic prosperity and social justice possible. This is what we mean by the transformation to climate neutrality. With this understanding of the tasks ahead of us, we will live up to our responsibility for global climate protection. We will bring together policy fields and align them with the common task of sustainable development. Germany will achieve CO<sub>2</sub> neutrality in 2035 and climate neutrality in 2040. With volunteers from all over Europe, we will also make our continent climate-neutral by 2040.

## ENERGY TRANSITION

- > **Establishment of a pan-European energy strategy that prioritises CO<sub>2</sub> neutrality.** In doing so, the European is to be connected with the local: Energy efficiency and sufficiency enable a decentralised energy supply embedded in a harmonised European energy system.
- > **Appointment of a Federal Minister for Energy** to bundle the many aspects of the energy transition.
- > **Phasing-out coal-fired power generation by 2030** at the latest, and the use of brown coal as early as 2025.
- > **Increasing the tendered capacities for renewable energies to a level of 25 to 30 gigawatts per year,** with a focus on photovoltaics and wind energy. Private and land-saving approaches expand photovoltaic capacities. The build-up of short-term and long-term storage stabilises the electricity grid and serves seasonal balancing.
- > **Encouraging the implementation of renewable energy (RE) projects by energy cooperatives and companies.** Municipalities and residents should be able to purchase electricity at reduced prices directly from neighbouring RE plants. In the case of larger RE projects, the citizens and the municipality should participate financially. We will also support the crowdfunding of renewable energy plants.

## BUILDING AND HOUSING

- > **Anchoring the right to adequate and affordable housing in the Basic Law.** The constitutions of Belgium, Spain and Portugal contain the explicit right to housing. In addition, a new housing community benefit linked to tax relief is to be created.
- > **Strengthening the non-profit housing**

**sector** by investing in social housing and cooperatives in order to ensure permanently affordable housing.

- > **Increasing the annual modernisation rate to at least 4 %.** This will be driven by funding programmes, roadmaps and a fair distribution of costs. Rent crisis and climate crisis are considered together without imposing an additional burden on renters. Landlords receive additional incentives to carry out effective modernisation.
- > **Promoting heating exchange programmes and introducing the one-third model** to guarantee that all heating systems that can only be operated with fossil fuels are replaced with climate-neutral technologies by 2035.

## INDUSTRY

- > **Align the entire value chain with an integrated climate, economic and socio-political framework:** Introduction of climate-neutral production processes and active structural change.
- > **Use of Carbon Contracts for Difference,** which finance technologies that have CO<sub>2</sub> avoidance costs significantly above the current CO<sub>2</sub> price. These 'contracts for difference' (CFD's) cushion investment risks and are suitable for decarbonising industry.
- > **Promoting hydrogen** only in areas where there are no options for (direct) energy use with higher efficiency. In the long term, only green hydrogen should be used as an energy carrier and raw material in industry and heavy-duty transport.

## AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

- > **Farmers and foresters are systemically relevant to the achievement of climate, biodiversity and environmental**

**protection goals and must be remunerated accordingly.** With a bold and long-term orientation of agricultural support and regulatory law, they will be given planning security to jointly combat climate change.

➤ **Agricultural support through public goods bonuses** to replace the system of direct payments by 2030. The following applies: „public money for public services“.

➤ **Increasing the existing minimum standards in German and European animal husbandry.** In the medium term, this leads to the introduction of a certificate for products produced to these standards.

## MOBILITY TRANSITION

➤ **Enabling the mobility transition at the local level.** Avoid, reroute or improve traffic.

➤ **Creating incentives for the use of the environmental network, i.e. walking, cycling and local public transport,** among other things through the development of a Europe-wide Mobility-as-a-Service platform (MaaS) combined with an increased expansion of local and regional public transport as well as the medium-term introduction of simple and inexpensive flat rates for public transport throughout Germany and Europe. In addition, autonomous driving is to be made possible and electromobility is to be advanced through standardisation and more customer-friendly use.

➤ **Reducing the attractiveness of motorised individual transport** through effective CO<sub>2</sub> pricing. In addition, maximum speeds on German roads should be reduced and the use of fossil fuels in vehicles should be banned by 2035.

➤ **Set the course to bring the Deutschlandtakt to the railways by 2030:** In the

medium term, by setting up a federal task force to coordinate the allocation of the train tracks defined in the Deutschlandtakt by means of concessions, following the Swiss model. In addition, by merging the federal railway infrastructure companies (EiU) and exempting them from profit maximisation; EiU and transport companies remain in state hands and part of the DB Group.

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY

➤ **Significantly reducing food waste,** in the long term by banning the disposal of unsold food, following the French model.

➤ **Promoting sustainable fashion:** among other things, by introducing a sustainability label, banning the destruction of unsold new clothing, establishing a secondary market for textiles through resale, repair and rental models. In addition, we want to expand research as well as separation, collection and recycling systems more strongly.

➤ **Reducing plastic waste** by pricing in the use of fossil primary raw materials and expanding European deposit and reusable systems. In addition, transparency towards consumers should be strengthened through the introduction of a label that provides information on the extent to which plastics are recycled.

➤ **Extension of the useful life of electrical appliances and reduction of electrical waste,** among other things by increasing the legal warranty period from two to five years and the introduction of a recycling fee (vRG) based on the Swiss model.

## NEGATIVE EMISSIONS

➤ **Develop a long-term European carbon negativity strategy.** Negative emissions can help to meet the 1.5 °C target. We provide our competences as a technology nation and advocate for global, large-scale projects to actively remove CO<sub>2</sub>

from the atmosphere. The prevention of new emissions and the retrieval of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere are complementary and simultaneous. Negative emissions are not a free pass for new emissions.

research and development. Extensive programmes for retraining and re-employment accompany the structural change.

► **Measures for CO<sub>2</sub> capture** include extensive afforestation measures, increased use of biochar in agriculture and forestry, technical processes such as direct extraction of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere (DAC), and hybrid solutions such as bioenergy combined with carbon capture (BECCS).

## CO<sub>2</sub> PRICING

► **The core element of our climate policy is a CO<sub>2</sub> price that is aimed at the 1.5 °C target and, if possible, applies throughout the EU.** Ideally, a strengthened EU will enforce this price, so that in the medium term an effective European CO<sub>2</sub> price is created, which is supplemented by a CO<sub>2</sub> countervailing duty at the EU's external borders (Border Carbon Adjustments/BCAs). For this reason, the current national emissions trading system in Germany should be transferred to the European emissions trading system as soon as possible.

► **In the short term, national emissions trading will be established as the basis for effective climate policy.** The fixed price system will be abolished and the minimum and maximum prices of CO<sub>2</sub> certificates will be increased over time. In 2025, a price corridor of 70 to 100 euros and in 2030 a price corridor of 100 to 300 euros per certificate will be reached. Emissions trading will be extended to all fossil fuels.

► **The transformation will be as socially just as possible.** The returns from the CO<sub>2</sub> price are to be used in equal parts as a direct repayment to citizens (climate dividend), as subsidies for green products and for state investments in

## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Digitalisation affects our daily lives, our economy, our working environment and our society. We now have the chance to shape digitalisation and artificial intelligence to improve all our lives. However, European states, citizens, and companies are dependent on American and Chinese technologies and corporations that do not respect the protection of our personal data and basic democratic values. Germany is already lagging behind considerably. Whether in administration, business or research, innovations are taking place elsewhere. So far, we have looked enviously to Estonia for this. Let's change that! We demand a self-determined European digital strategy that focuses on the benefits for citizens. For this, we need a fundamental consolidation of digitalisation in our society. We need a **digital transformation!** The digitalisation of state administration and public services must facilitate access for all, provide equal opportunities and increase efficiency and transparency in governance.

## A BETTER FUNCTIONING, SMARTER STATE

- > **Establish a digital ministry** with the capacity to act in order to bundle the digital competences of the federal government and drive forward the digital transformation in all areas.
- > **Remove the Federal Office for Information Security (BSI) from the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior** in order to eliminate the conflict of interest between strengthening IT security and the interest of security authorities in exploiting security vulnerabilities. The BSI is to be subordinated to the Digital Ministry.
- > **Digitisation of administrations:** All digital offerings must be as barrier-free as possible so as not to disadvantage any groups of people. Furthermore, all data collected by the state, where this is legally possible, should be accessible as open data.
- > **Use of open source software and open standards by state institutions wherever possible.** This will reduce dependence on private providers and developments financed by taxpayers' money will benefit the general public.

## DIGITAL ECONOMY

- > **Nationwide availability of gigabit connections and 5G mobile telephony by 2027** by reducing bureaucracy and waiving co-payment costs for municipalities. In the long term, internet access should become part of basic public services.
- > **Ensure network neutrality by law** so that no service, no device and no subscriber can be favoured or disadvantaged in terms of access or transmission speed.
- > **Ensure fair competition in the digital**

**space**, including by obliging large digital platforms to provide open interfaces to be compatible with smaller providers.

- > **Strengthen consumer protection for smart devices**, including through clear labelling of potential privacy risks (such as built-in sensors), mandatory provision of online services and security updates advertised at the time of purchase, and respect for fundamental principles of IT security.
- > **Develop a European copyright regulation without upload filters**, by taking into account valid interests (e.g. the creative industries and the public) and testing innovative elements such as de minimis limits, upload warning and micropayment systems.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- > **Establishment of a new, European AI competence centre 'Centre for European Research on Artificial Intelligence' (CERAI)**, which deals with AI research and the provision of legally and ethically compliant AI products and services and enables effective regulation without slowing down development.
- > **Support of a values-based AI regulation at European level** for the uniform and adapted prevention of encroachments on fundamental rights as well as the creation of standards and securing of the European Digital Single Market.
- > **Strengthen the understanding of AI in society** by promoting more computer science teaching in early education.

## NEW START IN EDUCATION

Education is the foundation of our society, our democracy and above all our future. At the same time, we (together with the younger generations) are facing major challenges such as increasing social tensions or more rapidly changing working environments and living conditions. Education is the gateway between these challenges and their solutions. Our education system is from a previous century and does not prepare us for the challenges of our future society. We demand more self-determination for schools to meet their own circumstances and at the same time binding national standards. We are rethinking education - lifelike, scientifically based, inclusive and with equal opportunities for all. At the core are the individual promotion of the strengths and potentials of all students and a school system that creates lifelong access to all educational and further training opportunities, as well as the courage to use innovative teaching methods in fully digitalised schools, training centres, universities and educational institutions. In doing so, we will give all citizens the opportunity to continue their education at any time in order to develop personally, to actively live democracy, to develop social skills and to participate in and shape an increasingly dynamic world.

## SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

- > **Individualised learning:** Establishing an inclusive, co-located form of schooling where each pupil can follow their own learning path, according to aptitudes and abilities, and by providing subject-specific courses at different levels of ability.
- > **Introduction of a learning structure in which playful, cognitively demanding, creative and sporting activities alternate during the school day.** This is made possible by introducing an all-day model.
- > **Learning in open learning environments,** in which pupils work in small groups or just for themselves on their own learning process. Teachers work in multi-professional teams, act as constant learning guides, give direct feedback, and provide impulses.
- > **We promote crucial skills for the 21st century: Communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking in the analogue and digital world.** In this way, we support young people in shaping their lives and the (digital) world they live in in a (self-)aware, informed and creative way.
- > **A comprehensive digital infrastructure** is a prerequisite for the inclusive and highly individualised school of the future. Every teacher and every pupil is equipped with teaching/learning devices, IT specialists ensure the maintenance of the school infrastructure, digital competences are continuously developed.
- > **Multi-professional teams in all schools create conditions that provide appropriate support for all pupils.** Inclusion is a lifelong and cross-societal process; every child has the right to participate inclusively in school life.
- > **Establishment of common qualifications** by obliging all Länder to use tasks from a common pool of tasks for school-leaving examinations. In addition, nationwide educational standards are to be created for all grades and subjects in order to ensure a nationwide uniform and equitable framework for educational quality.
- > **Establishment of a Federal Education Commission** to replace the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and to initiate education policy reforms across the Länder as a steering committee. The aim of this commission is to transfer educational science findings into policy and to make the quality of education comparable throughout Germany. The Länder retain their legislative competences, as all decisions of the Commission must be implemented by Land parliaments of the Länder in Länder-specific legislation.
- > **The prohibition of cooperation based on GG Art. 30 is to be revoked** in order to enable more effective cooperation at federal and Länder level.
- > **Strengthening of school autonomy** so that challenges and objectives of the school community can be specifically addressed locally. In addition, new concepts such as alternative approaches to performance measurement and free forms of self-guided learning can be developed. There is also a need to increase resources for schools, with special support for schools in socially disadvantaged regions and districts.
- > **Strengthening regional, international and thematic school networks** and opportunities for experimentation in school and classroom development.

## REFORM OF

## EDUCATION POLICY

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

### EDUCATION

- > **The quality of early childhood education is to be improved everywhere.** A good staffing ratio, individual support services and ongoing quality assurance make the Kitas (daycare centre) a place worth living for all children. The Kita is free of charge.
- > **To ensure that all children can develop competences in the linguistic, motor and social areas before they start school.** Early childhood education is the basis of equal opportunity education, since the differences that exist when children enter school can often no longer be compensated for. Therefore, daycare attendance should be compulsory as soon as the quality of early childhood education is ensured nationwide.
- > **The profession of nursery school teacher** should be made much more attractive by making training and further education free of charge and greatly expanding them. Higher remuneration recognises the important contribution of educators to society.

## FURTHER TRAINING,

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- > **Expansion of further education measures** through a wide range of different courses in all regions. The development of personality and skills should be available to all.
- > **Simplify and facilitate BaföG access.** Studies should never be prevented for financial reasons and therefore remain free of tuition fees.
- > **Enable flexible, mobile and interdisciplinary studies.** Students can take more

courses outside their field of study. It will be easier to transfer between universities and abroad. The organisation of studies, including semesters abroad, holiday semesters and internships, will be made easier.

- > **Strengthen science** by creating more long-term positions in academic and research careers and by communicating research results to the public in a comprehensible way by science communicators.
- > **Counteract financial hurdles for trainees.** Trainees are paid at least at the BaföG level and can complete those vocational training programmes for free that are officially approved by the state.
- > **Counteract the shortage of skilled workers.** Pupils receive comprehensive career guidance that shows them the opportunities of vocational training. Companies and the state work together to identify regional differences in the demand for skilled workers and to reduce regulatory barriers.
- > **Expansion of European training/ educational opportunities** through unbureaucratic ErasmusPlus offers and the possibility of at least 4-week stays abroad as part of a language course or internship.

## CONSOLIDATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND CHANCES

We strive for a society based on solidarity in which we appreciate and recognise individual life paths. To realise this image of society, we need de-stigmatised and improved social security systems that enable people to participate in society and to plan their lives in different ways. We want to provide better support for vulnerable people such as the homeless or young people living in residential care or foster families. We want to counteract social fragmentation and improve equal opportunities by promoting greater permeability in the distribution of income and wealth in society. To make this possible, we need the extension of collective wage agreements, broadly supported asset accumulation for low and medium incomes and a balanced inheritance tax. In addition, the world of work is undergoing major changes, which should be carefully monitored by policy-makers. The self-employed in particular, including those working in the arts and the cultural sector, need better framework conditions. In order to improve the situation of low-wage earners, we want to become active in the low-wage sector and work for more long-term jobs that are subject to social security contributions. By strengthening equal opportunities, we want to further develop our open society and support our democracy. This social cohesion is the basic prerequisite for mastering the upcoming major transformations together and leaving no one behind.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

> **Immediate adjustment of the social security systems (SGB II/SGB XII)** in order to guarantee a life in dignity for all, to facilitate a way out of poverty and, in particular, to counteract cross-generational poverty. In this context, changes in the areas of supplementary income regulations, protected assets, sanctions and, in particular, a revision of the regulations for the children and young people concerned are essential. The current standard rates will be increased by a one-time flat rate of 100 € per month.

> **Abolition of the German marriage tax credit (Ehegattensplitting) and use of the resulting additional income to increase child benefit to 300 € per month and child and to expand childcare.** The abolition will take place in stages, first for all new marriages, five years later for all marriages of younger couples and only after 25 years for all other existing marriages.

> **Expansion and scientific monitoring of Housing First in Germany and Europe** in order to achieve a sustainable reduction of homelessness. In the area of prevention, we would like to promote the concept of specialised centres where help for homeless people is offered in a centralised and coordinated way.

## SOCIAL MOBILITY

> **Introduction of a progressive capital transfer tax and inheritance tax** that counteracts the concentration of capital without endangering the build-up of financial assets in the broad masses and business successions.

> **Promote the build-up of assets for small and medium-income earners** through a basic education on financial topics for all citizens. This involves educating people about the risks and opportunities of their own financial actions,

from budgeting to investing in financial products.

## NEW WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

> **Abolish atypical employment relationships such as mini-jobs, midi-jobs and short-term employment as employment models** and allow for a real flexibilisation of employment relationships with any amount of working hours.

> **Expand the support and protection of those working in the arts and the cultural sector** by extending existing subsidisation concepts. Social security for the aforementioned groups should be expanded within the framework of the "Künstlersozialkasse" and also through educational measures, structurally via a corresponding platform, but also within education.

> **Adaptation of the working environment for mobile working:** Employees who want to work independently of location should be enabled to do so by their employers. If they refuse an employee's request for working independently of the workplace they allocate to their employees, they must justify this.

## RESILIENT HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The German healthcare system is one of the best in Europe. However, the Corona pandemic has clearly shown us the need for improvement in the planning, orientation and management of healthcare. One of the main problems, for example, is the conflict between economic interests and the needs of patients and employees. Health is not a tradable good. An innovative, forward-looking, **resilient health system** must therefore not only address the question of how diseases can be treated effectively and how patients can be cared for efficiently. Volt advocates a reorientation of healthcare that focuses on health as a whole. A reorientation of healthcare from a disease-oriented system to a health-oriented system is needed. This also includes a dialogue across society on how people can live healthily and age and die in dignity. Health reforms must reach all people and ensure barrier-free access to an efficient, digitally developed health system that is oriented towards individuals. This implies, above all, that health professions must be reorganised and that working conditions and benefits as well as the usability of health services for citizens must be improved.

## HEALTHCARE

### AND SERVICES

- > **Promote a transdisciplinary culture** of cooperation through increased collaboration between all professions and patients in the healthcare system.
- > **Initiate a digital transformation of the healthcare system** in order to network facilities, improve work processes and sustainably conserve resources.
- > **Establish an independent Federal Health Commission** representing all decision-makers in the health sector.

## PROMOTION OF

### PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE

- > **Supporting and improving the psycho-social situation of people through financial and personnel reinforcements of social work.** In the field of education, teachers and educators must be given more psychological-pedagogical tools to cope with critical situations. Furthermore, in this context, addictions of all kinds must be examined and treated more closely with regard to the reasons, the development and the course.
- > **Introduction of a sugar tax and compulsory labelling** of the health-related nutritional value of food.
- > **Establishment of an effective, evidence-based and progressive drug policy** that is primarily concerned with prevention, harm reduction and help for users. To achieve this, the decriminalisation of all drugs will be implemented according to the Portuguese model. There will also be increased investment in (youth) prevention, following the Icelandic model. Users are to receive a wide range of help and easier access to therapies.

## HEALTH PROFESSIONS

- > **Appropriate payment for all health professions** to ensure that remuneration is commensurate with the level of responsibility and training.
- > **Recognition of on-call time as full working time.** The reduction of the uninterrupted rest period and the extension of the maximum daily working time in exceptional cases for persons working in health professions must be abolished. Manipulation-free and complete time recording is to be introduced. In addition, for all areas there shall be defined, demand-oriented and evaluating staffing floors.
- > **Ward assistants are to become standard in old people's homes and hospitals** in order to relieve medical and nursing staff.
- > **Young people from the EU without vocational training** are to be offered the opportunity to learn a health profession in Germany.
- > **Creation of postgraduate courses of study for dual training for all health-related professions** in order to promote scientific further development of the profession by members of the profession.
- > **Promote an improved work-life balance for doctors** by reviewing the general ban on opt-out clauses (a regulation that allows the average working week of 48 hours to be permanently exceeded). In the long term, the aim is to solve the shortage of doctors in order to make opt-out clauses superfluous.
- > **Improve the working conditions of nurses** by establishing a federal chamber of nursing professions to ensure political representation and careful design of the training of nurses. In addition, the Buurtzorg model from the Netherlands should be established, which as a holistic patient-oriented concept has positive effects on the working conditions of nurses.

► **Improve the working conditions and accommodation standards of 24-hour aides** by consistently reporting their field of activity to the Medical Service of Health Insurances (MDK) and having them conduct consultations and audits regarding legal framework conditions.

► **Increase pension entitlements by 1/3 for health workers with direct patient contact** in order to achieve real appreciation for the workers and to ensure security in old age.

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## PROGRESSIVE MIGRATION POLICY AND INCLUSION

Germany has experienced immigration again and again for different reasons. The role it plays in our society has long been denied, leading to restrictive immigration policies. However, global migration flows are increasing in a more interconnected world, and climate change is increasing the migration of people from threatened areas. It is far from reality to rely on short-term integration measures and restrictive immigration. There is a need for a rethink in migration, asylum and integration policy, because globalisation requires long-term, cross-border solutions to global challenges. We want to shape a **progressive asylum and immigration policy** for Germany and Europe that consistently implements the human right to asylum, finds transparent regulations for immigration and focuses on **inclusion** instead of exclusion. We want to ensure that discrimination against refugees is reduced and that their opportunities to participate in society are significantly improved in order to create long-term opportunities to stay.

## IMMIGRATION

- > **Establish a progressive immigration law** by extending the Western Balkans regulation and reducing bureaucratic hurdles in the recognition of qualifications and professional experience. This should create long-term opportunities for asylum seekers and tolerated persons to stay. The labour market should adapt to people who are and have been excluded.

## ENABLING AND HUMANISING ASYLUM

- > **Acceleration of the asylum procedure** as well as legal support and closer free counselling following the model of Swiss refugee assistance.
- > **Intensifying the resettlement procedure:** The annual target is to admit 20,000 persons, with a focus on families with small children. In support of this, the pilot programme „New Start in a Team“ (NesT) is to be expanded.
- > **A case-by-case examination of the grounds for protection, also in the so-called safe countries of origin, ensures** that people with gender-specific reasons for fleeing are granted asylum. Not everyone is equally threatened; a differentiated view of safe countries of origin is needed to protect vulnerable groups.
- > **Municipalities are given the right to take in refugees** without the need for federal approval.
- > **Inclusive family reunification and family reunification for people with subsidiary protection status** by abolishing the cap on family reunification. In addition, the procedures for applying for family reunification are to be completed more quickly. Family reunification should be made possible in Germany for relatives up to the third degree.

## PARTICIPATION

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

- > **Strengthening future-oriented reception conditions for refugees** through access to the education system from the day of arrival and follow-up to employment without the approval of the Federal Employment Office. In addition, comprehensive healthcare is ensured, including psychological care.
- > **Improve the protection of vulnerable groups in collective accommodation** by having equal numbers of women and men, some of whom are designated as contact persons, especially for vulnerable people. In addition, psychological care facilities, shelters or separate accommodation facilities are set up.

## ACTIVELY COMBATING DISCRIMINATION

Our Basic Law enshrines human dignity, the right to free development of the personality, the right to life and physical integrity, and the equality of all people. Equal opportunities and equal participation for all people are for us the pillars of a democratic and just society. We want these fundamental rights to be actively guaranteed for everyone in this society. All people should be able to live and shape their lives without having to fear hatred. Above all, all people should be able to live in safety in their diversity with regard to their personalities and life plans. We want discriminatory and racist structures to be recognised and empower people to **actively fight discrimination**. All people should be supported in their ability to act, to defend themselves against discrimination and racism and to stand up for those affected.

## DIRECT SUPPORT FOR

### THOSE AFFECTED

- > **Comprehensive application of the Victim Compensation Act for victims of racist and discriminatory violence** and an expansion of the funding of specific specialised offices for victim counselling.
- > **Strengthening the anti-discrimination office** by expanding its competences. Different forms of discrimination and their specific effects must be recorded and countered with specific measures. For this purpose, there is a need for commissioners for the different forms of discrimination who are experts in the individual areas.
- > **Effective action against incitement and hate crimes.** To this end, criminal law should be supplemented with further characteristics of group-based misanthropy and specific contact persons should be appointed in the police and judiciary throughout the country..

## DISCRIMINATION

### AGAINST WOMEN

- > **Improving the compatibility of work and family life** through temporary part-time work after both parents return from parental leave.
- > **Strengthening equal opportunities in the world of work:** women earn less than men on average (gender pay gap). Companies with more than 100 employees must disclose and break down actual pay by gender to create more transparency about pay. In addition, at least 40% of all positions on boards of larger companies as well as listed companies must be held by women. For state-owned companies, a quota must apply from 2025 in which at least 50 % of management positions are not occupied by men.

> **The ban on advertising abortions (§ 219a StGB) should be abolished** and access to abortion should be free of charge for all pregnant women until the end of the first trimester. Furthermore, the compulsory counselling should be abolished and the expansion of voluntary neutral and independent counselling services for contraception and abortions should be promoted.

> **Combat period poverty** by distributing free menstrual products in and around public places. Through appropriate educational and media programmes, we want to promote education on healthy menstrual hygiene and the removal of taboos.

> **Comprehensive implementation of an action plan to combat violence against women and girls** in order to fulfil the obligation of the Istanbul Convention, e.g. through more efficient punishment of domestic violence and increased prevention work.

> **Strengthening women's self-determination** by legalising non-commercial surrogacy agreements and maintaining the legality of sex work on a voluntary basis. Violence, forced prostitution and human trafficking must be fought more strongly.

## DISCRIMINATION

### AGAINST QUEER PEOPLE

> **Extension of the protection against discrimination** of Article 3, paragraph 3 of the Basic Law to include the characteristic of „sexual and gender identity“.

> **Removal of all barriers to self-determined gender registration** and easier access to gender reassignment treatments.

> **Amend the law of parentage** to legally recognise and safeguard rainbow families.

> **Prohibition of conversion treatments** and their advertising.

> **Introduction of an individual, non-discriminatory risk assessment** as well as adjustment of the restitution periods for blood donation.

## DISCRIMINATION

### AGAINST DISABLED PEOPLE

> **Comprehensive implementation of the UN Disability Rights Convention.**

> **Removal of barriers in digital and public space** (public transport, leisure and cultural activities, public buildings).

> **Equal access to education** and better inclusion in the education system.

## RACISM

> **Together with experts and affected groups, find a different wording for the term „race“.** Subsequently, the term should be changed by the new wording in all legal texts (especially in the Basic Law).

> **Combat structural racism in security bodies,** among other things by amending the law to prevent the practice of racial profiling, creating more educational opportunities (in training as well as in service), promoting comprehensive nationwide studies on racist and extremist attitudes in security bodies, independent complaints offices within the police, and making identification compulsory for officers and the use of body cams.

> **Strengthening the clarification of German colonial history,** among other things by embedding it in the culture of remembrance and educational work, the recognition of crimes such as the genocide against the Herero and Nama and the restitution of looted cultural assets.

## ANTI-SEMITISM

> **Combat all forms of anti-Semitism using the Working Definition of Anti-Semitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.** This should happen through better processing and combating of anti-Semitic incidents, more exchange in relation to Jewish life through learning content on the Shoah and the historical course of anti-Semitism, as well as strengthening and supporting Jewish life in all areas of society.

## AFTERWORD

Increasing nationalism limits political thinking to national action and endangers European unification. We need more togetherness rather than merely co-existing in a functional neighbourhood. We need more of the spirit of caring for one another rather than acting against each other.

**We need more Europe - so that our history does not repeat itself.**



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