

# **Volt's Mapping of Policies**

*Edition 8.1*

*Challenge 1 - Smart State*

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# Challenge 1 - Smart State

## Vision

European citizens and residents expect their governments and public institutions to provide effective and efficient high-quality public services as well as transparent public administrations. Europe, over decades of integration, has set a standard of quality in public provision, allowing for an unprecedented high quality of life for citizens and a unique European social model.

However, in the wake of the economic crisis, growing inequality, and emerging technologies, trust in public institutions has disintegrated, while endemic corruption and inefficiency continue to plague public life.

For Volt, public service is first and foremost intended to serve citizens and residents. We hold as core tenets the principles of management by objectives, transparency, accountability, citizen empowerment, and subsidiarity in allocation of competencies.

Volt will work to ensure that across the European Union, public institutions in the member states are reformed to a modern forward-looking community with state-of-the-art technology and new thinking to tackle the preceding years of crisis and periods of economic recession, and in some cases, decades of neglect.

In times of transformation, governments must adapt to enable every citizen to fully participate in and contribute to society, and provide for maximal social inclusion and mobility. Digital services should be used when they make analogue services better. Smart States must adopt new tools to earn their citizens' trust through accountable, transparent, and efficient governance. Volt will invest in our common future, including not only innovative public services to cut waste, but also innovative education systems, quality healthcare, and an effective investigative and judicial system to combat corruption. Together, we can use technology for common prosperity.

## **I. Administrative effectiveness to reduce waste and improve service quality**

Digital technology affects nearly every aspect of our daily lives, and must start playing a key role in the way our countries are governed. Volt wants to digitise public services to reduce waste, cut inefficiencies and corruption, ensure transparency and security, and to make the State a true servant of its citizens.

## A. Digital revolution

Make digital solutions the backbone of our administration, providing key tools to improve both internal processes (*back-end*) and external services (*front-end*), reducing inefficiencies, and strengthening relations between administrations and citizens. Digital tools must be embedded in every policy decision as a means and not an end.

Use proven and emerging technologies to provide public services with a user-centric approach, facilitate and monitor transactions as well as citizens' data storage. Examples of innovative services are e-Taxation, digital ID, e-Voting, e-Health and e-Residency, which can be pursued through emerging technologies such as blockchain ledgers.

### 1. In Public Administration

- **Create paperless administration wherever they don't yet exist.** Volt will aim to create an infrastructure for completely paperless processes,<sup>1</sup> as well as harmonized Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) standards<sup>2</sup> in order to maintain competitiveness, to reduce waste and to implement efficient services guaranteeing increasing interoperability between databases, platforms and applications. Each action pursuing this goal will take into account three elements: organization, tools, and the government-citizen relationship. New and improved services will be easily usable and accessible from different devices at the same time. Public entities will re-engineer their internal processes, adapting them to new tools, organisations and applications. Finally, services will be interconnected through the use of homogeneous standards.
- **Create safe and effective digital infrastructure to enable innovation.** Improvements in digital infrastructure will be prioritised to meet the future needs of the private sector and of the general public.
  - The introduction of fibre optic networks will be accelerated to boost internet speed; internet coverage will also be significantly improved.<sup>3</sup>
  - City sensors,<sup>4</sup> community WiFi and consolidated infrastructures will be implemented to achieve cost efficiency and guarantee service coverage. This will also enable a greater use of shared platforms to provide administrative services (i.e. HR and financial management),<sup>5</sup> as well as individual services like cloud usage.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, Digital Public Services, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-public-services-scoreboard>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, ICT standardisation, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/ict-standardisation\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/policy/ict-standardisation_en)

<sup>3</sup> For more details, see [Smart State, Guarantee Digital Rights and Freedom, Internet Access](#)

<sup>4</sup> Smart Santander, Santander Facility, available at <http://www.smartsantander.eu/index.php/testbeds/item/132-santander-summary>

<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada, Shared Services Canada, available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/shared-services.html>; Department of Public Expenditure and Reform of the Government of the Republic of

- All new technologies will be vetted using a Proof of Concept model to demonstrate their feasibility by testing their practicality before implementation.

## 2. In e-Governance

- **Foster the adoption of electronic identification and trust services** for electronic transactions and digital signatures,<sup>6</sup> speeding up the processes such as signing electronic rent contracts, accessing confidential files, and submitting online taxation. Blockchain ledgers could foster the diffusion of digital identity across the European Union, and their adoption is supported by use cases and pilot studies which have already taken place.<sup>7</sup>
  - Ensure all pilot studies include requirements of at least two-factor authentication (e.g. through a PIN1, PIN2 system).
  - Cryptographic certificates for digital services certify authenticity and integrity in accordance with data protection requirements.
- **Disseminate the Estonian e-Residency model** to enable non-EU actors to set up a business that can operate within the European Single Market.<sup>8</sup>
- **Use big data and predictive analytic systems** to better tailor policies and government services to citizens' needs.<sup>9</sup> This data should be used during the policy process (where applicable), while at all times upholding the highest standards of privacy, data protection, and protecting fundamental rights.
- **Grant access to and use open data formats to increase government transparency** and provide citizens and enterprises with information that either increases accountability and efficient governance or may be used for research interests. Organise hackathons where data is made available to allow developers to improve existing IT infrastructure and applications, to create innovative solutions, and increase cyber security of public infrastructure.

## 3. In Healthcare

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Ireland, An Examination of Shared Services in the Irish Public Service and Internationally, available at <https://assets.gov.ie/5165/201218160319-a9036a6133464e51a378cc3cf3d27879.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, Digital Single Market, available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en>

<sup>7</sup> OpenGovAsia, How the Dutch government is exploring blockchain use cases through many concurrent pilot projects, available at <https://www.opengovasia.com/articles/how-the-dutch-government-is-exploring-potential-uses-of-blockchain-through-many-concurrent-pilot-projects;>

<sup>8</sup> Start a Company, Republic of Estonia e-Residency, available at <https://e-resident.gov.ee/start-a-company/>

<sup>9</sup> European Commission, Making Big Data work for Europe, available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/big-data>

- **Diffuse e-healthcare practices at the national level**, ensuring patients' records<sup>10</sup> and their clinical histories can be easily shared among hospitals and general practitioners, and implement Europe wide e-prescription policies to ensure easy and secure access to prescribed medication for citizens that live, work or otherwise are abroad.<sup>11</sup> Emerging technologies such as blockchain ledgers can support the development of these digital services.<sup>12</sup>
- **Develop a public e-booking system for specialists** to reduce costly waiting lists.

#### 4. In the Law

- **Make legal proceedings more accessible.** Governments need to be accountable for each document that is produced with regards to legal proceedings, exploiting the emerging technologies to adequately store it and share it with all the involved stakeholders.<sup>13</sup> Facilitating the right of access to documents or information held by public administrations will make the actions of public bodies transparent and guarantee the protection of legitimate interests and citizens' rights. Moreover, emerging technologies, such as blockchain ledgers, will facilitate the protection of documents and information such as sensitive data or information concerning public order. This would make it more difficult to deny an applicant's request to access in order to protect opaque interests.

#### 5. In Security

- **Pursue the usage of blockchain ledgers**, such as the Keyless Signature Infrastructure (KSI) Blockchain used in Estonia, to make data manipulation impossible, making donations to public actors transparent and traceable.<sup>14</sup>

### B. Talent and Reputation

Revive, strengthen, and reward motivation and performance among public sector employees to increase responsiveness to the changing environment and to citizens'

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<sup>10</sup> e-Estonia, e-health records, available at

<https://e-estonia.com/solutions/healthcare/e-health-record/>

<sup>11</sup> e-Estonia, e-Prescription, available at <https://e-estonia.com/solutions/healthcare/e-prescription/>

<sup>12</sup> OpenGovAsia, Blockchain and the public sector - What happened in 2016, available at <https://www.opengovasia.com/articles/7274-blockchain-and-the-public-sector-developments-in-2016>

<sup>13</sup> OpenGovAsia, How the Dutch Government is exploring blockchain use cases through many concurrent pilot projects, available at <https://opengovasia.com/how-the-dutch-government-is-exploring-blockchain-use-cases-through-many-concurrent-pilot-projects/>

<sup>14</sup> KSI Blockchain. See e-Estonia, available at <https://e-estonia.com/solutions/security-and-safety/ksi-blockchain/>

needs. Foster an agile environment to stimulate public sector employees' performance, their growth and career opportunities.

- **Set up innovation-teams<sup>15</sup> within local and central administrations.** These “i-teams” will develop digital solutions to tackle the most pressing issues for their area of competence, and then monitor their implementation. These teams will combine digital and service design competences, ensuring that new tools and services fit citizens' capabilities and needs.<sup>16</sup> Public sector digitisation must be considered as a means, not an end.
- **Facilitate new skill learning in public sector jobs.** Public bodies will provide a wide range of training courses to their employees, enabling them to develop relevant skills, such as project management and IT skills, that are required in such a rapidly changing environment. All public sector employees will have these competences certified. Public sector employees can experience and learn from private sector dynamics by participating in “public-private sector exchanges”.
- **Open the position-based recruitment system in public administration<sup>17</sup>** across Europe to attract talent from all backgrounds and professions within ministries and public bodies: people from differing careers offer specific skills. Special entry points for young talent may include programmes that offer specific challenges to recruit those who respond best to these tests.<sup>18</sup>
- **Introduce a management-by-objectives system** composed of financial and non-financial incentives to improve public sector employees' performance and accelerate career paths of strong professionals. Performance will be evaluated based on outcomes.
- **Introduce attractive, fair remuneration and advancement for all** public sector employees as well as high quality entry-level positions in the public sector.

## C. Shared competences

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<sup>15</sup> Nesta, The teams and funds making innovation happen in governments around the world, available at <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/i-teams-the-teams-and-funds-making-innovation-happen-in-governments-around-the-world/>

<sup>16</sup> The Behavioural Insight Team, Easy Attractive Social Timely, available at [http://38r8om2xjhh125mw24492dir.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/BIT-Publication-EAST\\_FA\\_WEB.pdf](http://38r8om2xjhh125mw24492dir.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/BIT-Publication-EAST_FA_WEB.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> OECD, Acquiring capacity, available at <http://www.oecd.org/gov/pem/acquiringcapacity.htm>

<sup>18</sup> Ministère du Budget, des Comptes Publics de la Fonction Publique, Administration and the Civil Service in the EU 27 Member States, available at [https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/files/files/publications/etudes\\_perspectives/Administration\\_and\\_the\\_Civil\\_service\\_in\\_the\\_27\\_EU\\_Member\\_states.pdf](https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/files/files/publications/etudes_perspectives/Administration_and_the_Civil_service_in_the_27_EU_Member_states.pdf)

Identify and avoid inefficient or ineffective duplication of shared competences at all levels of public administration to clarify accountability and decision-making processes. Decision makers must be accountable to their constituency for the use of public funds and their outcomes. Clear and demarcated competence allocation between bureaucracies at state, regional and local levels fosters greater accountability from political representatives.

- **Apply the subsidiarity principle** to ensure the most effective and efficient distribution of administrative and legal competences at the local, national, and EU level.

#### **D. Transparent state**

Ensure full transparency in the use of public resources: how they are accounted for, where they come from and how they are spent. Monitor tendering processes to make certain that public procurement delivers “best value for money” (BVM).<sup>19</sup> Competitive proposals for the delivery of public services ensure better outcomes for citizens while a transparent system limits fraud.

- **Exploit the role of the European Court of Auditors in the governance of National Audit Offices** for a better use of public finances, both at the European and national level, aiming to homogenize the public sector accounting standard<sup>20</sup> and share best practices among countries<sup>21</sup> (i.e. production of Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) at a national level).<sup>22</sup> The Court should be strengthened to ensure that public finances are used to correctly and efficiently implement policies, monitoring coherence between policy design and policy implementation.
- **Strengthen the power of National Audit Offices**<sup>23</sup> to review the activities, size, and objectives of public sector entities and public policy programmes without compromising the speed and quality of services. They should conduct periodic independent assessments of all public assets and enterprises to test their

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<sup>19</sup> National Audit Office (NAO), Assessing value for money, available at <https://www.nao.org.uk/successful-commissioning/general-principles/value-for-money/assessing-value-for-money/>

<sup>20</sup> European Commission, Eurostat, EPSAS Standard, Overview, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/epsas/>, Eurostat, Government finance statistics and EDP statistics - Government accounting, available at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/government-finance-statistics/government-accounting>

<sup>21</sup> European Court of Auditors, 2018 ECA Award for research on public sector auditing, available at <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/ECA-Award-2018.aspx>

<sup>22</sup> National Audit Office (NAO), Whole of Government Accounts 2018-2019, available at <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/whole-of-government-accounts-2018-19/>

<sup>23</sup> Overview, National Audit Office (NAO), available at <https://www.nao.org.uk/about-us/>

effectiveness and increase efficiency, and test innovative public finance and budgeting techniques.

- **Centralize procurement processes** or use aggregation vehicles like framework agreements and consolidated contracts to achieve economies of scale and make processes more efficient. The central platform for public procurement (TED)<sup>24</sup> should be integrated within existing national e-procurement platforms.<sup>25</sup> Interoperability and data exchange needs to be ensured in order to enable cross-national bids and to eliminate existing lock-in effects.
- **Improve market knowledge**,<sup>26</sup> for instance through research and Pre-Commercial Procurement practices, to better define public sector needs in multi-annual and annual procurement planning.
- **Foster better, more effective and transparent use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** and results-based outsourcing only in cases of a clear benefit for citizens, when market externalities, such as environmental and societal impacts, accountability, and possible perverse incentives are accounted for. It is necessary to carry out thorough impact assessments for important outsourcing initiatives with potentially large impacts on public welfare. Public provision of services must also be evaluated on that same thorough basis as PPP.
- **Establish and expand the use of cooperatives and mutuels in the provision of public goods and services** to strengthen democratic accountability, citizen participation, and effective delivery and shared ownership.<sup>27</sup>

## II. Build an enabling education system for the future

Education is one force for fostering social mobility and inclusion, as well as one of the most important **foundations to unite people in a vibrant and dynamic democracy**, and of open pluralistic societies. Europe is facing extremely diverse regional education challenges. Volt will ensure that schools are inspiring, safe, attractive and stimulating workplaces. With the aim of creating **equal opportunities and access to high-quality education**, Volt aims to enable reflective and responsible development for every single

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<sup>24</sup> European Union, TED home - TED tenders electronic daily, available at <http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do>

<sup>25</sup> European Commission, E-Procurement, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/e-procurement\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/public-procurement/e-procurement_en);

<sup>26</sup> European Commission, Public procurement - a study on administrative capacity in the EU, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/how/improving-investment/public-procurement/study](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/how/improving-investment/public-procurement/study);

<sup>27</sup> European Parliament, European Parliament resolution of 15 June 2017 on a European Agenda for the collaborative economy (2017/2003(INI)), available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P8-TA-2017-0271>, Cooperatives Europe, Vision paper: A cooperative vision for the collaborative economy, available at <https://coopseurope.coop/vision-paper-cooperative-vision-collaborative-economy>

child living in the European Union. Volt will also support extracurricular learning as well as informal and non-formal education. **Lifelong learning and vocational training** must be accessible to all throughout their professional and personal lives, in order to offer people opportunities regardless of age. There will be a strong emphasis on early-age education. Finally, there must be **greater investment in European higher education, along with research and development**. High-quality higher education must be accessible and available to everybody, irrespective of background. In order for every citizen to participate in and contribute to society, education must provide the necessary ingredients for enriching personal development and open up a wide range of opportunities for European citizens.

In order to build a system that empowers citizens to partake in and contribute to society, education requires major reforms to develop the basic skills for a participatory society, stimulate civic engagement, and foster and reward excellence. As it is Volt's founding principle to form policy based on best practice, we regard Finland's effective school reform as an example to emulate. Its key achievements include an emphasis on pre-primary education, providing resources for high-quality teacher training and adequate pay for teachers, short school hours, and a light homework load, in addition to providing free meals and free transport to school. Volt considers these the foundation for the future of learning. Let's work together to transform schools into an inspiring place for knowledge transfer and enlightenment for students and teachers alike.

## **A. Pre-primary Education**

While public institutions will support and complement parents in a variety of ways, parents will always retain the primary responsibility for the welfare and flourishing of a child. The objectives of early childhood education are to support children's growth towards becoming ethically responsible members of society, to provide children with the knowledge and skills necessary in life, and to improve children's learning conditions. Therefore, there is a need to increase its quality and accessibility.

- **Ensure preschools and kindergartens are accessible to all children for free.**<sup>28</sup>
- **Creative playful pre-primary education:** Volt will place a strong emphasis on early education, following the Finnish model.<sup>29</sup> Early childhood education and care programmes (e.g. mentoring programmes) like in Finland provide positive role models and improve children's development.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> For more details see [Social Equality, Alleviate Poverty, Youth](#)

<sup>29</sup> For more details see <https://minedu.fi/en/early-childhood-education-and-care>

<sup>30</sup> Denmark's forest pre-schools, developed by pedagogues and researchers, are also a best practice. Besides a healthy development, they also aim at developing a responsible use of natural resources. See Growing Wild Forest School, A Brief History of Forest Schools Around The World, available at <https://www.growingwildforestschool.org/post/the-brief-history-heritage-of-forest-schools-around-the-world>

- **Establish rehabilitation working groups made up of representatives** from health care services, members of the voluntary and statutory sector, child care and family counselling and the school sector. These groups exist to organise daycare and education for children with special needs and, support the monitoring of growth and learning.<sup>31</sup>
- **Ensure access to programmes for children** under 6, such as speech therapy and support from child psychologists.
- **Guarantee a high Europe-wide standard of parental, paternity, and maternity leave.** After maternity and paternity leave, either one parent or both take parental leave. The duration of parental leave should be a minimum of 26 weeks and may be taken either consecutively, which the employer cannot refuse, or at irregular intervals, which the employer can refuse. Similar to maternity and paternity allowance, parental allowance is equivalent to earned income.<sup>32</sup>

## **B. Primary and Secondary Education**

Particular attention needs to be paid to primary and secondary education as it is a key factor for social inequality. Volt aims to develop a truly comprehensive system that will generate more informed, involved and empowered citizens to close the inequality gap.

### **1. Citizens' Basics**

- **Provide free, healthy, daily school meals** to all students to break the cycle of hunger and child poverty. Access to free meals has nutritional, learning, and health benefits, and supports productivity and educational success.<sup>33</sup>
- **Ensure that high-quality internet connection access and connectivity to technology,**<sup>34</sup> in terms of the fastest available mobile network connections and WiFi, reach rural areas and other marginalised communities as soon as possible. This is absolutely essential for children's education nowadays, as it provides quick access to information from a variety of sources. However, its use needs to be accompanied by the teaching of critical thinking skills.

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<sup>31</sup> OECD, Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in Finland, available at <http://www.oecd.org/finland/2476019.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> For more details, see [End discrimination against groups and minorities, End discrimination against women, In the workplace](#)

<sup>33</sup> Journal of School Health, Nutrition and Student Performance at School, available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2005.00025.x>

<sup>34</sup> For more details see [Guarantee Digital Rights and Freedom, Digital rights.](#)

- **Strengthen the educational system by expanding the funding of public schools** in urban and rural areas. Every child is given the opportunity to attend a well-developed school.
- **Create special integration programmes for migrant children** to help them adapt to a new culture, language, and environment.

## 2. Innovative approach and techniques

Make education effective and accessible for a wider range of student abilities and talents. Investigate long term trends and regularly update curricula to be in line with our changing societies, support the development of new tools and education parameters.

- **Invest in research to find better and more creative ways to teach**, like phenomenon-based learning (teaching by topic),<sup>35</sup> peer-to-peer learning, experimental approaches, value-based education, and competence thinking to facilitate creativity and imagination. Empower every child to build on strengths, while securing minimum standards, and encourage children to learn through taking some responsibility, participation and civic awareness.<sup>36</sup>
- **Introduce new approaches to measure the success of schools**, such as student enrollment/dropout rates, staff retention and professional development, and school connectivity via funding raised from philanthropy, parent engagement and community satisfaction metrics. Aim to have no more than 20 pupils per teacher in all schools.
- **Incentivise the development of digital skills**, both in early education and in preparation for the professional realm (coding classes etc.).
- **Strengthen the educational system through improved online courses** and providing the best-needs based education for all, especially for students living in remote areas.
- **Review neuroscientific and biological research papers** on learning, attention and concentration, e.g. in relation to lesson times, exam times etc., and try to find new class schedules.<sup>37</sup>

## 3. Curriculum reform

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<sup>35</sup> Phenomenal Education, Phenomenon based learning, available at <http://www.phenomenaleducation.info/phenomenon-based-learning.html>

<sup>36</sup> Cats Forum, Children as Actors Transforming Society, available at [catsconference.com/](http://catsconference.com/)

<sup>37</sup> UC Berkeley, Poor grades tied to class times that don't match our biological clocks, available at <http://news.berkeley.edu/2018/03/29/social-jetlag/>

- **Ensure English fluency**, as English is the undisputed lingua franca in international communication. Simultaneously put a greater focus on the mastery of the native language to allow for adequate public engagement within local communities.
- **Emphasise STEAM<sup>38</sup>** subjects that will be offered in English, and actively connected to arts and creativity (STEAM).
- **Focus on citizenship education and how a political system works**, from the local council, to the national government and the European Union. Make citizenship education a priority.
- **Introduce a compulsory subject “life competences and responsibility”** (one hour per week) in the last two years of secondary school covering content such as economics and basic financial literacy, legal basics, social skills, sustainability, healthy lifestyle, as well as the cooperation of the schools with their local environment.
- **Reform educational programmes and curricula so that they actively teach tolerance and intercultural dialogue**, civic engagement, overcoming prejudices and promoting democratic values. Prioritise courses on gender equality, overcoming gender stereotypes and discrimination, as well as sex and relationship education.
- **Increase education on mental health and well-being** that must address the challenges that persons of all age groups face in a world of constant connectivity, socio-economic marginalisation and online bullying and harassment.
- **Introduce classes on media literacy** that explore creativity and empathy through film, drama and art.
- **Increase the emphasis on learning skills and competences**, e.g. oral communication (also in front of wider audiences), debating and written skills.

### **C. Teacher satisfaction**

Attract more qualified people to become teachers that stay motivated in their job by raising the reputation of and compensation for this important profession.

- **Support annual education summits** held by the European Union.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics

<sup>39</sup> European Commission, Second European Education Summit, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-summit\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-summit_en)

- **Reform teacher training by offering more practical experience**, reviewing the conditions of admission and supporting lateral entrants.
- **Extracurricular engagement and overtime** should be paid or compensated.
- **Invest in emotional support, counselling, psychological support and care** for teachers provided by specialised staff and in close collaboration with local medical facilities.
- **Prioritise investments in schools and teachers** in communities facing social exclusion.
- **Encourage and reward long term teacher commitment.** Give teachers and education professionals more say in shaping education policy.
- **Focus on teaching for and through creativity**, with new work structures and work environments. Introduce assessment models based on 360° Feedback.

#### **D. Buildings and Infrastructure**

- **Transform education centres into community centres** for the exchange of ideas.
- **Invest in new or renovated facilities and buildings** that facilitate the learning of future-oriented skills, such as networking, where possible within their architecture. Functional versions of these concepts already exist; we just have to spread them all over Europe. Orestad high school from Copenhagen is one such example.<sup>40</sup>

#### **E. Higher and vocational education**

In today's world, there is a greater demand for highly skilled and socially engaged people. In the period up to 2025, half of all jobs are expected to require high-level qualifications.<sup>41</sup> Digital technology is making jobs more flexible and complex. People will be required to be able to handle complex information, think independently and creatively, use resources - including digital ones - communicate effectively, and be resilient. Creativity and the ability to create links between and across disciplines are crucial for personal development and solving societal problems. Every citizen should

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<sup>40</sup> To have a look at this amazing school building, see 3xn, Can a building help the education process?, available at <http://3xn.com/project/orestad-college>

<sup>41</sup> European Commission, Education and Training, About higher education policy, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/higher-education/about-higher-education-policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/higher-education/about-higher-education-policy_en)

always have the opportunity to achieve higher levels of education, regardless of the choices they have made at different stages of their lives. Volt aims to revitalise tertiary education with innovative measures to keep pace with new trends.

- **Expand Erasmus+ by significantly increasing its budget** and improving accessibility, outreach and awareness of the opportunities it provides. Currently, the dissemination of information about the programme is done through DG EAC's<sup>42</sup> platform, but we want to ensure greater collaboration with national and regional institutions to reach the places that would benefit most from this exchange. Since the start of Erasmus+ in 2014, over 2 million people have participated in the programme.<sup>43</sup>
- **Expand Erasmus Pro** for apprenticeships and ensure it reaches people from all walks of life and all socio-economic backgrounds in both educational and vocational programmes. After 30 years, the Erasmus programme has proven its worth and its expansion is a worthwhile investment in Europe's future.
- **Facilitate intersectoral mobility** between universities and other higher education institutions on the one hand and the private and third sector on the other. This would promote the exchange of different perspectives to enable highly qualified individuals to pursue flexible careers.
- **Establish an award for best teacher(s) in the EU.**
- **Open discussions about the design for the university of the future**, e.g. open access for all residents of a given region, and online lectures.
- **Enable students to continue their education** through scholarship opportunities for post-baccalaureate and for older students who wish to continue their education to promote lifelong learning.

## F. Excellence

Create centers of excellence in selected universities and colleges to gain international recognition, attract talent, foster innovation and create synergies with the private sector where appropriate, if relevant, while preserving academic freedom and the integrity of the education system.

- **Invest in universities in economically disadvantaged areas** to attract students and resources.

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<sup>42</sup> Directorate General for Education and Culture

<sup>43</sup> European Commission, ERASMUS+, The EU programme for education, training, youth and sport (2014-2020), available at [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/gen-erasmusplus-factsheet\\_2020\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/gen-erasmusplus-factsheet_2020_en.pdf)

- **Invest in education centers linked to local crafts and excellence** (e.g. Napoli school for tailors/dairy producers).
- **Involve companies and civil society** in the design of selected courses and seminars to ensure that the required competences are created and to achieve greater a degree of mobility between educational institutions.

### III. Make high quality healthcare available for everyone

In line with the World Health Organization (WHO), Volt defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Mental and physical diseases and disabilities must be destigmatized in a mindful society. Volt believes that an efficient and sustainable healthcare system emphasises prevention rather than treatment and reduces the human and financial cost of disease management.

Based on these principles, Volt aims to create a world-class healthcare system. Volt will invest in improving universal access to healthcare. Everywhere on the continent it should be possible to see a GP or specialist within a few days and receive timely treatment (and reduce the costs of waiting lists). In addition, access to mental healthcare needs to be improved. Effective e-health tools must become an integral part of healthcare provision to increase access to care. Moreover, Volt will allocate more resources to preventive healthcare, with special focus on the ageing society, lifestyle diseases and children's health and resilience. Volt aims to create an efficient healthcare system in which caregivers are empowered to provide the best care based on the needs and wishes of the patient. Overall, closer collaboration between the medical and healthcare professions in relation to physical, mental and social health will be key to improving the quality and efficiency of healthcare.

#### A. Alignment of European healthcare systems

- **Ensure universal health coverage and access to healthcare** for all European residents.
- **Develop European guidelines** based on benchmarking and "best in class" performance, for **waiting times, diagnostics and treatments** to improve the quality of healthcare. To this end, Volt proposes to implement a system of annual reviews of public healthcare within a framework in the European Semester (e.g.

through co-operation with various research organisations such as the Health Consumer Powerhouse).<sup>44</sup>

- **Work towards an efficient and high-quality healthcare system**, which requires continuous optimisation of coordination and cooperation between public institutions, healthcare providers and market participants. Healthcare providers should not be (fully) managed by (centralized) bureaucratic authorities, but must be independent and empowered to deliver the highest quality of care without governments, politicians and bureaucrats interfering in operational decisions. Instead, a variety of organisationally independent healthcare and insurance providers should enable high-quality healthcare, where operational decisions are primarily made by medical/health professionals with the participation of patients. The state(s) should provide the necessary conditions for healthcare and insurance providers to operate at a high level, and establish the legal and regulatory framework for healthcare financing to achieve adequate universal coverage with affordable health care for all (Bismarck style).<sup>45</sup> Given the multiplicity of healthcare systems across the continent, Volt believes that the optimal public-private coordination and division of tasks must be determined on a country-by-country and case-by-case basis.
- **Ensure pan-European coverage of healthcare services** to facilitate the mobility of European citizens by extending existing healthcare agreements (e.g. by enabling an EU-wide e-booking system for specialised healthcare services using the European Health Insurance Card – EHIC). Our long-term vision is that the EHIC would give EU citizens access to all types of healthcare across the EU.
- **Ensure world-class healthcare by enforcing evidence-based guidelines across Europe.**
- **Introduce further harmonisation** of prescribing and use of medicine across countries by the European Medical Agency (EMA). For example, a first priority is to reduce the large inter-country variation in antibiotic consumption, as the overuse of antibiotics is increasingly leading to antibiotic resistance.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Each year, a document is published that compares the healthcare performance of every European country. Our national policy teams can adapt to changes more easily with their different priorities and speed. See Health Consumer Powerhouse, Euro Health Consumer Index, available at <https://healthpowerhouse.com/publications/>

<sup>45</sup> Especially for larger countries the Bismarck system consistently ranks better in performance than the Beveridge systems, as described in the Health Consumer Powerhouse, Euro Health Consumer Index 2017, available at <https://healthpowerhouse.com/media/EHCI-2017/EHCI-2017-report.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Summary of the latest data on antibiotics consumption in the European Union, available at [https://ecdc.europa.eu/sites/portal/files/documents/Final\\_2017\\_EAAD\\_ESAC-Net\\_Summary-edited%20-%20FINALwith%20erratum.pdf](https://ecdc.europa.eu/sites/portal/files/documents/Final_2017_EAAD_ESAC-Net_Summary-edited%20-%20FINALwith%20erratum.pdf)

## **B. Access to healthcare**

- **Reduce waiting times by introducing e-booking systems** for specialists, with investment in more specialists and facilities.
- **Create a multi-professional approach** by supporting the smart centralisation of specialised medical specialities. Medical centers should provide a comprehensive point of contact for patients to consult physicians as well as psychiatrists, psychologists, social counselors, speech therapists, physiotherapists and other health professionals. Patients' medical records need to be shared easily, but securely and confidentially between different healthcare sectors so that healthcare professionals can provide the best possible treatment to the individual.
  - Physical centralisation is primarily required for rural areas; in urban areas, centralisation intelligently connects healthcare sectors through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
  - Investments in tele-medicine and e-health are needed to enable efficient and patient-friendly comprehensive contact with healthcare professionals.
- **Set up a European Health Express** for rural areas or areas that do not have good access to healthcare and invest in new ideas like mobile clinics<sup>47</sup> like those used by the Red Cross or Lifeline Express.<sup>48</sup>
- **Ensure the provision of mental health care services across Europe.**
  - Patients should have quick access to mental healthcare professionals through their GPs.
  - Mental healthcare should increasingly also be offered via innovative e-health platforms, such as video consultations.
  - Governments should play an active role in promoting mental healthcare. This would lower the threshold for patients to seek mental healthcare and eliminate the stigma attached to mental health problems.
  - Work to eliminate stigma and mystification around mental illnesses like depression, and provide both early and continued support as well as preventative measures.
  - Take a comprehensive, "universal and whole of society approach" to mental health based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) Action Plan.<sup>49</sup> State measures to regulate working conditions with respect to workers' dignity, work-life balance, working hours, vacation time, and

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<sup>47</sup> Mobile clinics in Ukraine to bring health services to people in need, WHO Europe, available at <http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/ukraine/news/news/2014/12/mobile-clinics-in-ukraine-to-bring-health-services-to-people-in-need>

<sup>48</sup> The Story of Lifeline Express, The better India, available at <https://www.thebetterindia.com/125248/lifeline-express-world-first-hospital-train-indian-railways/>

<sup>49</sup> WHO, Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030, available at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240031029>

flexibility. Measures should be taken to inform the workforce, support them in times of distress and monitor the enforcement of workplace policies and guidelines.

- **Ensure sufficient provision of general practitioners and primary care units** in economically disadvantaged areas, especially in rural areas through better remuneration for doctors in rural areas, facilitation of medical services to hard-to-reach areas through e-health and other measures.

### **C. Focus on preventive healthcare**

To achieve the best health outcomes and quality of life, Volt will focus on preventive healthcare. Many diseases are the result of long-term exposure to risk factors some of which can be addressed through better lifestyle choices, cleaner living environments and a greater focus on preventive healthcare, especially in the early years of life. Volt believes that more resources need to be allocated to preventive healthcare in the following areas:

#### **1. Lifestyle choices and diseases**

Across Europe, lifestyle choices contribute significantly to the overall burden of disease.<sup>50</sup> Unhealthy lifestyle habits such as smoking, physical inactivity and poor diet are some of the main risk factors for disease, which can lead to (chronic) conditions such as cancer, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and premature death. Although people are living longer, they suffer from diseases more often, which has a negative impact on well-being and further increases healthcare expenditure. Therefore, preventive lifestyles for both physical and mental/social well-being should be a focus in schools, companies and in public awareness campaigns. Regardless of socioeconomic position, all European residents should have access to first-class preventive healthcare throughout the life-cycle.<sup>51</sup>

- **Promote healthy lifestyles** by offering information on healthy lifestyles and regulating access to harmful and/or addictive substances. All European schools will provide up-to-date learning tools and practical lessons on lifestyle choices. Additionally, they will also ensure sufficient time and opportunities for physical activity.

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<sup>50</sup> According to the Global Health Observatory by WHO, in 2015 6 out of the 7 top death motivations were due to noncommunicable diseases, where the world's biggest killer are ischaemic heart disease and stroke, accounting for 15 Million people, see WHO, Top 10 causes of death, available at <https://www.who.int/news/item/10-08-2011-new-who-report-deaths-from-noncommunicable-diseases-on-the-rise-with-developing-world-hit-hardest>; The Lancet, Life, death and disability in 2016, available at [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32465-0/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)32465-0/fulltext)

<sup>51</sup> This includes having access to affordable healthy nutrition.

- **Further restrict access to tobacco for minors** (i) through an EU-wide ban on the legal purchase of tobacco products by persons under 18 years of age and (ii) better enforcement of the purchase restrictions (e.g. through sales licences and fines for vendors and underage buyers).
- **Increase taxation of tobacco products to discourage consumption.** This is justified by the estimates that by 2020 tobacco would account for 10% of all deaths, and that smoking causes about 71% of lung cancer cases, 42% of chronic respiratory disease and nearly 10% of cardiovascular disease.<sup>52</sup>
- **Increase taxes on alcohol,** in combination with other policy measures to discourage consumption. This is justified by the negative health consequences of alcohol consumption, including drunken violence.<sup>53</sup>
- **Set EU guidelines for physical activity** in schools and the workplaces.<sup>54</sup>
- **Explore and test tax reforms for a healthier diets,** including:
  - Increasing value added tax (VAT) on unhealthy foods, including saturated fats, trans-fats and processed sugars.
  - Decreasing in VAT on healthy vegetables and fruits.
- **Provide European guidelines for educating children in schools about healthy eating.**
- **Standardize or prescribe vaccines against sexually transmitted infections** such as the human papilloma virus and the Hepatitis B virus in government-sponsored vaccination programmes.
- **Provide affordable and accessible sexually transmitted infections (STI) testing facilities for all.**
- **Provide European guidelines for immunisation programmes for the elderly.**
- **Advocate for controlled decriminalisation or legalisation of drugs.** Portugal's progressive legislation and attitude towards drug addiction has shown that the current prevailing model of a "war on drugs" has not and will not

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<sup>52</sup> WHO, New WHO report: death from noncommunicable diseases on the rise, with developing world hit hardest, available at <https://www.who.int/news/item/10-08-2011-new-who-report-deaths-from-noncommunicable-diseases-on-the-rise-with-developing-world-hit-hardest>

<sup>53</sup> The Lancet, Risk thresholds for alcohol consumption: combined analysis of individual-participant data for 599 912 current drinkers in 83 prospective studies, available at [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)30134-X/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30134-X/fulltext)

<sup>54</sup> People who are insufficiently physically active have a 20% to 30% increased risk of all-cause mortality, where regular physical activity reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease including high blood pressure, diabetes. WHO Global Status Report 2010, available at [http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/ncd\\_report\\_full\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/ncd_report_full_en.pdf)

work. Volt intends to emulate the Portuguese model and decriminalise all drug possession below a certain threshold. This will free up police resources to prosecute large scale drug smuggling and victimise buyers. It will enable European societies to treat addiction as a medical rather than a criminal problem.<sup>55</sup>

## **2. Provide preventive healthcare programmes for minors**

Early monitoring of health and wellbeing enables effective interventions that have a positive long-term impact. Parents should be supported to make the best choices during pregnancy and for their children in terms of physical and mental healthcare, nutrition, exercise and immunisations. Research has shown the importance of early interventions, and a comprehensive approach to early childhood development to improve children's long-term health.<sup>56</sup>

- **Implement and set EU-wide standards for high-quality preventive healthcare programs for minors.** Health programmes should monitor physical development as well as psychosocial, speech and socio-emotional development through regular check-ups. Through these programmes, parents should receive the support they need to give their children the best possible start in life. The measures include:
- Providing prenatal care that ensures fair and safe conditions for newborns, regular screening of mothers (e.g. fetal karyotype testing, ultrasound examinations, substance abuse education).
  - Providing EU-wide guidelines on (i) the timing of preventive lifecycle screenings/examinations and (ii) the essential procedures/controls for each screening/examination.
  - Targeted selection of vulnerable minors for additional screenings.
  - Sharing best practices and data between countries to improve national programmes based on best practices. Although preventive healthcare programmes for minors exist in most European countries, health outcomes and access to health care varies widely across Europe.<sup>57</sup>
  - Standardising obligatory vaccination programmes for minors in accordance with European guidelines.
  - Carrying out the neonatal heel prick to detect genetic diseases among newborns (e.g. hypothyroidism, phenylketonuria, cystic fibrosis).
  - Increasing coverage of preventive healthcare for minors through measures such as infant home visiting and school attendance programmes.

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<sup>55</sup> Cata Institute, Drug Decriminalization Policy in Portugal, available at

[https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/greenwald\\_whitepaper.pdf](https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/greenwald_whitepaper.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Heckman Equation, There's more to gain by taking a comprehensive approach to early childhood development, available at <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/invest-in-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-the-economy/>

<sup>57</sup> NCBI, Preventive youth health care in 11 European countries: an exploratory analysis, available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3359454/>

- Providing prevention programmes against depression and anxiety to adolescents, as research has shown that helps to reduce the symptoms of these conditions.<sup>58</sup>

### 3. Reduce environmental risks

Global climate change, urban air pollution and lead pollution are responsible for nearly 2.4% of diseases and deaths worldwide.<sup>59</sup> To reduce the negative impact of those causes, Volt wants to:

- **Public monitor key variables that indicate of environmental quality** (e.g. air pollution using SO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub> and particulate levels, water quality (pH and harmful residual minerals such as limestone), in real-time to (1) inform citizens, (2) guide policy and (3) detect dangerous situations which can lead to diseases such as thyroid carcinoma and mesotheliomas.
- **Take measures to improve air quality in cities**, e.g.:
  - Limit traffic on days when certain air quality limits are exceeded, as is already practised in Spain, Italy, and Denmark, where measures include (i) prohibiting cars and/or trucks from entering the city or (ii) restricting access to even or odd number license plates.
  - Improve public transportation networks.
  - Support the development of shared means of transport (e.g. car sharing).
  - Provide environmentally friendly alternatives for transport, e.g. safe and comprehensive infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians and bike sharing.
  - Ensure affordability of public transport for all.
- **Tighten regulation and controls on industry to minimise harmful emissions.**
- **Investing in research on air purification and targeted regeneration of green spaces regeneration and implementing pilot projects.**

### 4. Data-driven prevention

Volt believes that better use of data can be a powerful driver of innovation in healthcare, especially when it comes to better tailoring (preventive) healthcare to the individual. Volt aims to:

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<sup>58</sup> NCBI, A Meta-Analytic Review of Depression Prevention Programs for Children and Adolescents, available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2758769/>

<sup>59</sup> WHO, Global Health Risks: Mortality and burden of disease attributable to selected major risks, available at [http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global\\_burden\\_disease/GlobalHealthRisks\\_report\\_full.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/GlobalHealthRisks_report_full.pdf?ua=1)

- **Strengthen government agencies in monitoring risk factors** based on the probability of occurrence of medical risk factors, such as diseases in patients, in different geographic and demographic categories to better target preventive healthcare to vulnerable subgroups.
- **Use anonymised patient data to set up a trustworthy and secure Health Information System** where a citizen can opt-in to obtain “recommendation packages” for screening based on individual characteristics.<sup>60</sup> The prompts for testing will be communicated through e-health platforms (via apps, smart devices, etc.) resulting in the following benefits:
  - Improve health outcomes through individualised preventive healthcare.
  - Provide forecasts for incoming test volume to healthcare providers.
  - Reduce waiting time for patients.
  - Track tests by patients to remind them to perform them at the right time.
- **Tax deductibility of health care expenses for citizens.**
- **Monitor (changes) in the prevalence of chronic diseases to support policy-making in preventive healthcare.**

#### **D. Empowering and educating patients**

- **EU-wide provision of urgent but non-life-threatening medical assistance through an on-call service** (telephone number 116117.) Callers would receive medical assistance or an appointment with a specialist over the phone. They could also be advised whether they should go to a nearby primary care or emergency care unit. This would alleviate unnecessary pressure on emergency rooms and first-aid units.
- **Run an EU-wide campaign to inform citizens about the existence** and services of the 116117 telephone number.
- **Raise public awareness of the need for organ donations** to increase the number of donors (e.g. by sending letters for an informed-based decision-making to every citizen turning 18 and by creating a transparent system). Explore a gradual transition to a system where organ donation is the default option at the time of death, unless a patient actively chooses to opt-out (not to donate).
- **Prevent discriminatory exclusion of potential blood donors through**

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<sup>60</sup> The Västerbotten Intervention Programme in Sweden demonstrates the value of individualized preventive healthcare for cardiovascular disease. The program consists of physical tests, analysis and one-one-one discussions of the results with a nurse, resulting in changes of lifestyle suggestions that improve the individual's health condition. See BMC Public Health, A cost-effectiveness analysis of a community based CVD program in Sweden based on a retrospective register cohort, available at <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-018-5339-3>

**unbiased Individual Risk Assessments (IRA).** The donation of blood and blood components enables health care providers in the European Union to treat trauma or major surgery, treat chronic blood diseases, and to produce medicinal products.<sup>61</sup> Although we rely on these voluntary blood donations, the exclusion criteria introduced to prevent blood donations with transmissible diseases such as HIV have not been sufficiently updated. As a result, they still categorically hold back large population, e.g. parts of LGBTIQ+ and commercial sex workers. Current criteria and lengthy deferral periods are often discriminating and have led to non-compliance.<sup>62</sup> In line with Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights about Non discrimination<sup>63</sup>, Volt calls for blood donation on an IRA that is independent of sex, gender and sexual orientation, similar to that used in Italy since 2001, without having any measurable impact on the HIV epidemic.<sup>64</sup> We want the IRA to consist of a questionnaire followed by a personal interview with a medical professional. Following international safety standards, we demand a deferral period after risky behaviour that does not exceed three months<sup>65</sup>.

- **Harmonisation of information and guidelines on lifestyle choices leading to lifestyle diseases** based on the latest scientific evidence.

## E. Aging populations

### 1. Healthcare for the elderly

Across Europe, we need to find solutions to challenges posed by shifting demographics<sup>66</sup> in healthcare. As life expectancy increases, so does the incidence of illness among older people, leading to an increasing need for nursing and medical care in this segment. While many older people find support in assisted living facilities and nursing homes as they age, autonomy and self-determination, which remain important components of a decent quality of life, may still be compromised. Although advances in medical technology have led to spectacular increases in life expectancy, quality of

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<sup>61</sup> European Commission about Blood, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/health/blood\\_tissues\\_organs/blood\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/health/blood_tissues_organs/blood_en)

<sup>62</sup> Sturrock BR, Mucklow S., What is the evidence for the change in the blood -donation deferral period for high-risk groups and does it go far enough?. *Clin Med (Lond)*. 2018;18(4):304-307. available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6334046/> -

<sup>63</sup> Article 21, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights available at [https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu\\_charter/article/21-non-discrimination](https://fra.europa.eu/en/eu_charter/article/21-non-discrimination)

<sup>64</sup> Suligoi B, Pupella S, Regine V, Raimondo M, Velati C, Grazzini G. Changing blood donor screening criteria from permanent deferral for men who have sex with men to individual sexual risk assessment: no evidence of a significant impact on the human immunodeficiency virus epidemic in Italy. *Blood Transfus*. 2013;11(3):441-448. available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3729137/>

<sup>65</sup> See above: Sturrock BR, Mucklow S. *Clin Med (Lond)*. 2018.

<sup>66</sup> European Commission, Population structure and ageing, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population\\_structure\\_and\\_ageing](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population_structure_and_ageing)

life is often not adequately considered in medical interventions. Volt aims to address this:

- **Improve the quality of life and (long-term) care for older people by making assisted living programmes more widely available**, e.g. through community care programmes such as Buurtzorg in the Netherlands, where self-managed teams flexibly arrange the best care that fits for the individual patient, and other such programmes.<sup>67</sup>
- **Education and training of medical students, specialists and other health professionals to facilitate decision making processes about possible treatments with patient participation**, with the intention of improving or maintaining quality of life. This is particularly relevant for patients with complex co-morbidities and at the end of life.
- **Ensure the provision of palliative care** in the home environment at the end of life.

## **2. Supporting fertility and childcare**

A steady trend of declining fertility can be observed across Europe. Over the period from 1961–2015, the highest annual number of live births in the EU-28 was recorded in 1964, at 7.8 million. Since then, the number of live births in the EU-28 has declined, reaching a low of 5.0 million in 2002.<sup>68</sup>

- **Ensure that parents have access to affordable childcare** so that an individual work-life balance can be achieved.
- **Enable equally-paid maternity and paternity leave** for a specific period of time, and then extra time off that may be shared according to the parents' preferences. Strong incentives for both parents to take parental leave.<sup>69</sup> The length of leave can be decided according to the countries' existing frameworks, but ensuring gender equality.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> The Guardian, Buurtzorg: the Dutch model of neighbourhood care that is going global, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2017/may/09/buurtzorg-dutch-model-neighbourhood-care>; For further suggestions on how to improve long-term care for older people also see Interlinks, available at <http://interlinks.euro.centre.org/project>. These programmes are also meant to improve the situation of formal and informal caregivers, while taking into accounts gendered aspects of care.

<sup>68</sup> Eurostat, Fertility Statistics, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Fertility\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Fertility_statistics)

<sup>69</sup> This also applies to same-sex couples. Single parents can either choose to take the full time off (otherwise available to both parents) or to be awarded financial benefits.

<sup>70</sup> For more details see [End discrimination against groups and minorities, End discrimination against women, In the workplace](#)

## F. Innovation and research

- **Invest in e-health** programmes to promote healthcare coverage, flexibility and efficiency of healthcare provision, and research focused on advanced medical data analytics. Volt wants to:
  - Implement e-booking systems to avoid costly waiting lists.<sup>71</sup>
  - Improve telemedical networks to improve access to (i) healthcare in remote areas and (ii) consultations with specialists. The latter should be provided especially for patients with complex conditions and high degree of co-morbidity that may complicate travel or lead to a sudden need for a specialist.
  - Use e-health to connect a patient's prescriptions to the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Prescriptions loaded on the EHIC should make it possible to obtain prescription medicines from any pharmacy in the EU, improving access to medicines.
  - Provide opt-in options to load (i) patient diagnoses and/or medical records, (ii) organ-donation preferences, and (iii) living wills into the EHIC to improve healthcare tailored to the individual.
  - Invest in standardized secure digital patient records (1) for data collection to increase efficiency of healthcare and (2) to enable innovative big-data research based on anonymised General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)-compliant patient records.
  - Increase funding for modernisation and digitisation to facilitate medical workflows in hospitals and medical institutions.
  
- **Invest in medical research by:**
  - Increase funding for national and transnational publicly -owned research organisations and found a new publicly owned European research centre with explicit focus on biomedical research, loosely modelled on the National Institute of Health (USA).<sup>72</sup> This research centre will enable cutting-edge research to be carried out on a scale that is not necessarily supported by national laboratories or cannot be risked by private companies. Thus, the research centre is designed to empower Europe as a daring and pioneer region in the field of medical research, thereby strengthening the competitiveness of European life sciences companies by promoting innovation.

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<sup>71</sup> In 2014 Macedonia managed to almost eliminate its waiting lists by implementing a real-time e-booking system as described in the Euro Health Consumer Index 2017. See WHO Europe, Integrated health information system, available at <http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia/news/news/2015/05/towards-an-integrated-health-information-system-in-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia>

<sup>72</sup> National Institutes of Health, home, available at <https://www.nih.gov/>

- Promote evidence-based medicine by investing in the development and implementation of standardised European guidelines<sup>73</sup> for the treatment and diagnostics of diseases in order to harmonise the quality of healthcare across Europe.
- Incentivise research in areas of public interest with low economic potential such as new antibiotics,<sup>74</sup> treatments for rare diseases<sup>75</sup> and vaccines.<sup>76</sup>
- Investe in individualised medicine using high-throughput techniques (DNA sequencing, micro-arrays, mass spectrometry, etc.) to investigate how we can improve both preventive and curative healthcare by using individual genetic, physiological, and biochemical characteristics, while integrating behavioural aspects such as physical activity and nutrition. Key issues for the successful implementation of these techniques include: (i) reducing the cost and increasing the quality of measurement technologies; (ii) developing the necessary bioinformatics, computational and statistical methods to integrate the volumes of data masses generated by these measurement techniques;<sup>77</sup> (iii) providing funding for long-term academic research projects and/or agendas relevant to high-throughput techniques and medical applications; and, (iv) ensuring the ethical handling of the data and procedures,<sup>78</sup> including absolute privacy and security of patient data.
- Incentivise the publication of null--results while improving the transparency of research projects and their statistical analyses<sup>79</sup> through standardised reporting criteria,<sup>80</sup> pre-defined analyses plans, and where compatible with data protection rules, the publication of the raw data.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> For example: C. O'Mahony et al., Effectiveness of the 2014 European Society of Cardiology guideline on sudden cardiac death in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy: a systematic review and meta-analysis, available at <https://heart.bmj.com/content/early/2018/10/26/heartjnl-2018-313700>  
 Polverino et al., European Respiratory Society guidelines for the management of adult bronchiectasis, available at <http://erj.ersjournals.com/content/50/3/1700629>. See also [Alignment of European healthcare systems](#)

<sup>74</sup> C. Källberg et al., Introduction and geographic availability of new antibiotics approved between 1999 and 2014, available at <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0205166>

<sup>75</sup> L. Luzzatto et al., Rare diseases and effective treatments: are we delivering?, pg 750–752, available at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673615602975>

<sup>76</sup> C. Sheridan, Vaccine market boosters, pg 499–501, available at <https://www.nature.com/articles/nbt0609-499>

<sup>77</sup> S. Huang, K. Chaudhary, L. X. Garmire, More Is Better: Recent Progress in Multi-Omics Data Integration Methods, available at <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fgene.2017.00084/full>

<sup>78</sup> M. Langanke et al., Comparing different scientific approaches to personalized medicine: research ethics and privacy protection, pg 437–444, available at <https://www.futuremedicine.com/doi/10.2217/pme.11.34>

<sup>79</sup> J. P. A. Ioannidis, Why Most Published Research Findings Are False, available at <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.0020124>

<sup>80</sup> For example: European Commission, European guidelines on clinical trials, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/clinical-trials\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/clinical-trials_en)

<sup>81</sup> See for example: Nature Journal, Scientific Data, available at <https://www.nature.com/sdata/>

- **Create regulations for more sustainable packaging** of medicine using renewable resources and less plastic.

## **G. Healthcare professionals**

### **1. Nurses**

- **Promote home care networks** that link a patient's existing community to a local team of nursing professionals who then work with that community to tailor support to patient's need, following the example of Buurtzorg Netherlands.<sup>82</sup>
- **Strengthen the independence and attractiveness of the nursing profession, a more independent and attractive field** by promoting small, self-managed teams.
- **Introduction of nursing assistants** to help patients in their daily hospital life, in addition to nurses attending to prescribed medical needs, as is the case in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Denmark.
- **Encourage the unionisation of nurses and nursing assistants** so that their voices can be heard.

### **2. Doctors / general**

- **Harmonise accreditation schemes across Europe** and review entry requirements for study (e.g. reward social engagement skills and introduce special exams as in Austria<sup>83</sup> to prevent high drop-out rates and to gain the necessary qualifications).
- **Incentivise and encourage participation in European exchange programmes** during study and work for all healthcare professionals.
- **Allow for flexible working hours**, part-time jobs and family-friendly working environment.

### **3. Midwives**

- **Review insurance costs for midwives.**

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<sup>82</sup> For best practice for neighbourhood care see Buurtzorg Nederland, Humany over bureaucracy, available at <https://www.buurtzorg.com/>

<sup>83</sup> Medical University of Vienna, Medicine and Dentistry Admission Test, available at <https://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/en/studies-further-education/application-admission/medicine-and-dentistry-degree/admissions-test/>

- **Support self-organised projects** designed to efficiently connect pregnant women to midwives, both pre- and postnatally (e.g. through apps with online chats during pregnancy and in the first months after birth).

## **H. Healthcare costs and efficiency**

Over the past few decades, most countries have experienced a steady increase in healthcare expenditures. Currently, spending ranges between 5% of GDP in Romania to 11.1% of GDP in France and Sweden.<sup>84</sup> After the economic crisis, direct out-of-pocket spending has increased faster than public spending on healthcare. This trend is making healthcare more expensive for consumers and could pose a serious long-term threat to affordable access to healthcare for all European citizens. Volt believes governments should keep healthcare affordable and therefore both avoid cuts to overall healthcare spending and increase funding to programmes that aim to reduce overall costs of healthcare in general, such as preventive medicine initiatives. Volt also promotes the efficient use of resources and best-cost-benefit policies. To this end, Volt aims to:

- **Reduce costs by establishing a legal and regulatory framework that allows healthcare professionals** to flexibly provide the best care for individual patients **in small self-governing teams**, e.g. the Buurtzorg model in the Netherlands.<sup>85</sup>
- **Ensure efficient and safe use and supply of medicines by:**
  - Providing medicine in individualized packages and quantities according to patients' needs instead of standard packages that often result in large quantities of unused medicine and waste.
  - Coordinating negotiations with the pharmaceutical industry at European level to reduce costs.
  - Reducing waste of drugs by better allocating nearly expired medicine to regions where they are currently needed through a Europe-wide marketplace.
- **Create incentives for physicians and health professionals to provide more preventive healthcare** services to avoid "downstream costs". Incentive schemes need to be set individually for each country to suit the respective health (financing) system.

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<sup>84</sup> OECD, Health at a glance: Europe 2016, available at <https://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Health-at-a-Glance-Europe-2016-CHARTSET.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> The Guardian, Buurtzorg: the Dutch model of neighbourhood care that is going global, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/social-care-network/2017/may/09/buurtzorg-dutch-model-neighbourhood-care>; Ernst & Young documented estimated savings of around 50% to healthcare services provided by Buurtzorg due to the implementation of community care programs that significantly reduced the required hours of care. See Buurtzorg, About Us, available at <https://www.buurtzorg.com/about-us/>

## **I. Sexual and reproductive health and rights**

- **Make abortion accessible and affordable for all women<sup>86</sup> and ensure that women have access to contraception.<sup>87</sup>** Approach sexual and reproductive health and rights holistically as a key issue of gender equality and health.
- **Ensure that schools introduce accurate obligatory teaching on reproductive health and rights** so that there is a European standard for curricula that schools comply with.

## **J. Options and rights in pregnancy and birth**

Despite the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO)<sup>88</sup>, an alarming rate of unnecessary medical interventions<sup>89 90 91</sup> are performed on low-risk births. In most cases, these interventions prove dehumanising for the women involved, who perceive a “baby-factory” environment that reflects a society focused on productivity rather than respect.

Maternity is one of the most important and impactful moments in a person's life. The *Humanization of Birth* is a concept that focuses on the mother's needs, and away (but not excluding) midwives and other medical professionals. All efforts should be directed towards providing mothers with the scientific and legal information they need to make the best possible choices when giving birth to their child. The rights of partners and close family members should also be highly considered.

- ❑ **Ensure that the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations on humanising childbirth are followed.**
  - Ensure that medical consultation, treatment and childbirth respect human rights and dignity.
  - Call on the ministries responsible for health and gender equality to collect data on medical interventions during childbirth and on cases of

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<sup>86</sup> For more details see [Own your body, Reproductive rights](#)

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Cfr. WHO recommendations Intrapartum care for a positive childbirth experience, available at: <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/intrapartum-care-guidelines/en/>

<sup>89</sup> Health at a Glance 2019, OECD Indicators, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/health/health-systems/health-at-a-glance-19991312.htm>

<sup>90</sup> WHO statement on caesarean section rates, available at: [https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/maternal\\_perinatal\\_health/cs-statement/en/](https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/maternal_perinatal_health/cs-statement/en/)

<sup>91</sup> WHO recommendations for induction of labour, available at: [https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/maternal\\_perinatal\\_health/9789241501156/en/](https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/maternal_perinatal_health/9789241501156/en/)

gynaecological and obstetrical violence, and to conduct and publish studies on this topic .

- Disseminate the best practices promoted by WHO and invite national medical associations to discuss this issue and make recommendations on the prevention of gynaecological and obstetrical violence, in particular through a commission to promote a caring approach in gynaecology.
- Conduct information and awareness-raising campaigns on patients' rights and on preventing and combating sexism and violence against women, including gynaecological and obstetric violence.
- Adopt and implement legislation on patients' informed consent and their right to information at the different stages of medical procedures, where this has not already been done.
- Ensure adequate funding for health-care facilities to provide decent working conditions for nurses, respectful and caring treatment of patients and women in labour, and access to pain relief.
- Provide specific training for obstetricians and gynaecologists and raise awareness of gynaecological and obstetric violence as part of these training.
- Ensure that the training of doctors, midwives and nurses pays particular attention to the relationship between care providers and patients, the concept of informed consent, gender equality, the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons, persons with disabilities and vulnerable persons, communication, the prevention of sexism and violence, and the promotion of a humane care approach.
- Propose specific and accessible reporting and complaint mechanisms for victims of gynaecological and obstetrical violence inside and outside hospitals, including with ombudspersons services.
- Provide for a mechanism to investigate complaints about gynaecological and obstetrical violence to the exclusion of any mediation and, if this is not already the case, provide for sanctions against healthcare professionals if a complaint about this type of violence is proven.
- Offer a support service for victims of gynaecological and obstetrical violence and ensure that they receive care.
- Signature, ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention by those states that have not yet done so.<sup>92</sup>
- Allow a second companion, appointed by the couple, to assist during childbirth.
- If there are no medical reasons not to do so, structures should be put in place to enable the accompanying person to be present and to provide her with emotional support during the pregnancy hospitalisation.

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<sup>92</sup> Obstetrical and gynaecological violence, available at:  
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=28236&lang=en>

- Increase availability of water births in public health systems<sup>93</sup>.
- Make birth plans mandatory in which the pregnant woman and medical professionals discuss and determine the further procedure during the childbirth.
- Allows the mother to choose the health professionals to support her during pregnancy, labor, childbirth and postpartum period.
- Assure that women's rights are respected, even during pregnancy, labor, childbirth and postpartum period.
- Incentivise the implementation of birth centers or birth houses in the public health system.

#### **IV. Ensure a fair legal system, effective law enforcement and anti-corruption legislation**

Volt wants 'smart' European states to ensure **frictionless** access to **humane, fair, transparent, accountable** and **efficient** legal systems and law enforcement agencies.

Volt also has a **zero-tolerance policy** towards **corruption. state capture**, when private interests dictate state policy, **white collar crime**, and corporate **tax avoidance**. These behaviours are contrary to European values themselves and lead to significant losses of public and private resources.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary, non-exhaustive, to do the following : (1) overhaul and improve the judicial system, (2) act against white collar (corporate and financial) crime and (3) regulate, protect, and incentivise whistleblowing. In addition, law enforcement needs to be improved and limited to regulate state-of-emergency extensions and end police violence (prosecution and police operations), and sanctions outside the penal system must be prioritised.

If not addressed, corruption can become systemic, and in Europe it is most often associated with illiberal models of state capture. Globally, corruption has become increasingly critical as an endemic part of the structure of the global economy. Studies have found that there is anywhere between 21-32 trillion euros of unpaid taxes<sup>94</sup> are hidden in tax havens around the world. With growing inequalities leading to political instability and an urgent need to tackle other pressing global issues, ending corruption and tax avoidance is absolutely critical.

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<sup>93</sup> Immersion in Water During Labour and Birth (RCOG/Royal College of Midwives Joint Statement No. 1), Published on Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, available at: <http://www.rcog.org.uk>

<sup>94</sup> Tax Justice Network, The Scale of Tax Injustice, available at <https://www.taxjustice.net/the-scale-of-injustice/>

## **A. Intelligent judicial systems**

- **Reduce backlog of pending cases** by applying simple standards (e.g. focusing on first-in-first-out and urgent cases).
- **Develop alternative routes to litigation**, e.g. mediation and negotiation, in areas such as family law.
- **Encourage the digitisation of proceedings** for civil lawsuits below a certain amount in dispute and use digital means to help defendants keep up with their court dates, etc.
- **Expand legal aid services in all Member States to provide effective access to justice**, particularly to the most vulnerable and marginalised populations.

## **B. Fighting corruption**

- **Confer additional powers to the European anti-corruption office OLAF and the European Ombudsman, as well as the new European Public Prosecutor's Office.** The European institutions will be held accountable by the European Commission Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the Member States will be controlled by their respective anti-corruption institutions. Corruption needs to be controlled by an external actor to the government in question. Therefore, OLAF and the newly created European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), should be given additional powers to investigate cases of corruption in Member States, including the ability to access documents and conduct interviews in cooperation with the European Prosecutor in charge of the fight against corruption. Membership in the EPPO, which can only be established in the context of enhanced cooperation, should be mandatory in order to receive EU funding over and beyond the budget. OLAF should also have the right to bring cases to a national court, if necessary.
- **Expand the European Transparency Register**<sup>95</sup> to all EU institutions, including the Commission and the Council, and make it mandatory for all lobbying and advocacy organisations to be listed therein. Apply the same register system at all levels of government in the Member States.
- **Effectively tackle the phenomenon of 'revolving doors'** between governments and EU institutions, in line with Transparency International's recommendations.<sup>96</sup> Measures include substantial 'cooling off' periods for civil

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<sup>95</sup> European Commission, Transparency Register, available at <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do>

<sup>96</sup> TI report, Access All Areas, available at <http://transparency.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Access-all-areas.pdf>

servants and elected officials leaving their positions and taking on a role involving profit-oriented advocacy or lobbying for their former institutions. Institutional ethics committees must be established or reinforced and given credible, legally binding powers to prevent conflicts of interest after leaving public service, under stricter ethics guidelines. The recent Barroso & Goldman Sachs scandal must not be repeated.

- **Ensure that opportunities for abuse of power by state actors are limited by requiring the publication of public expenditure.** We will promote the implementation of e-Governance and e-procurement initiatives to stop bureaucratic corruption. To accommodate this changes must be made to accelerate the digitisation of state institutions and to make transparent both the decisions taken by state institutions and interactions with companies they contract. Any decision requiring public expenditure must be made fully accessible to the press and the constituents of the respective Member State. To accommodate this, Volt proposes to:
  - Use digital infrastructure to streamline and promote transparency of decisions made by state institutions and their contractors to ensure accountability.
  - Oblige Member States to advance the digitisation of their administration. In case of non-compliance, EU funding will be cut to incentivise this commitment
  - Allocate EU funds to support the development of infrastructure for such initiatives and to retrain civil servants to work with e-Government tools.
  
- **Lead by example on the transparency of party financing.** Not only do individuals in government receive illicit funding, but also political parties. Therefore, Volt will publish online the identity of all relevant donors and the amount donated . We will also introduce a code of conduct that regulates what kind of donations Volt is allowed to accept.
  
- **Introduce requirements for full disclosure of the office costs and expenses by elected officials** in carrying out their work, including Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament, modelled on the procedures already followed by certain groups of MEPs.
  
- **Expand the implementation of Integrity Pacts** and clean contracts in public procurement and public-private partnership, together with civil society, in line with best practices recommended by Transparency International.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>For more information see EU Reform chapter, security. Transparency International, Integrity Pacts, available at [https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/tools/integrity\\_pacts/3](https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/tools/integrity_pacts/3)

## **C. Ending tax avoidance & evasion, increasing tax collection efficiency**

- **Support the urgent implementation of the OECD/G20 Base Erosion Profit Shifting Actions (BEPS) project** to ensure that profits are taxed in the region where the economic activities generating the profits are performed and where value creation takes place.<sup>98</sup>
- **Push for the full adoption and implementation of the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) proposal** endorsed by the European Parliament in March 2018.<sup>99</sup> Multinational online companies must be taxed for their “digital presence” and value generated in a country.
- **Establish an EU tax authority to combat cross-border tax avoidance and evasion.**
  - Ban “letterbox”<sup>100</sup> companies that allow multinationals to create empty registrations in countries for tax purposes and ban ‘sweetheart’ discriminatory tax deals between governments and multinationals.
  - Shed light on and create transparency in company ownership structures by requiring the disclosure of personal data of the owners and beneficiaries of companies in the public register.
- **Push for administrative reforms across Europe at all levels of government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of tax collection** and abolish tax havens and tax loopholes in the EU.

## **D. Corporate social responsibility and accountability**

Thoroughly prosecute political, economic and financial crime and support initiatives to expand corporate social responsibility, ensure compliance and ethical standards. Strengthen whistle-blowing protection and extend due diligence to the entire value chain.

- **Reinforce the newly created European Public Prosecutor's Office** and encourage the development of **public prosecutors specialised in economic and financial crime** in countries where they do not yet exist.

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<sup>98</sup> OECD, BEPS Actions, available at [www.oecd.org/ctp/beps-actions.htm](http://www.oecd.org/ctp/beps-actions.htm)

<sup>99</sup> European Parliament, MEPs approve tax plan, available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180309IPR99422/meps-approve-new-eu-corporate-tax-plan-which-embraces-digital-presence>; European Parliament Research Service briefing, available at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599395/EPRS\\_BRI\(2017\)599395\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ReqData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599395/EPRS_BRI(2017)599395_EN.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> ETUC, Letterbox-type practices, available at <https://www.etuc.org/press/letterbox-type-practices-avoiding-taxes-and-exploiting-workers-across-eu>

- **Support the protection, anonymity and remuneration for whistleblowers** disclose information for the benefit of the public.
- **Advocate for international standards on corporate responsibility**, including the UN Compact, and the new Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights.
- **Put in place legislation that extends responsible practices** and due diligence throughout the supply chains.

### **E. Law enforcement and police operations**

- **Strengthen European police cooperation, define limits on state of emergency** and ensure that police forces operate in a fair and effective manner while minimising the level of violence and eliminating discriminatory practices.
- **Limit extension of the state of emergency**, ensure full and transparent monitoring of human rights during the period of a state of emergency, and establish stricter review mechanisms to ensure that such measures are truly necessary.
- **Promote the work of Europol and Eurojust**, accelerate and support integration and ensure respect for human rights.<sup>101</sup>
- **End ethnic profiling** during police identity checks and require officers to issue a stop form for every identity check.<sup>102</sup>
- **Limit the discretion of officers** by requiring reasonable and specific suspicion for all checks and searches.<sup>103</sup>
- **End police violence** through training, accountability mechanisms and monitoring.<sup>104</sup>
- **Limit the use of military-st police actions** for street protests and local conflicts.

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<sup>101</sup> For more details see [Other provisions for good governance](#), [Military & non-military capabilities](#) and [Common security culture](#)

<sup>102</sup> For more details see [End discrimination against groups and minorities, End discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, descent and skin colour, In the law](#)

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

- **Expand training of police forces in dealing with hate crimes.**<sup>105</sup>

## **F. Prison reform**

- **Ensure that prison conditions always comply with human rights and dignity regulations** in accordance with Council of Europe standards and that administrative powers are not used in a discriminatory manner. Also ensure that prisons are as close as possible to the outside world to facilitate reintegration and inclusion.
- **Encourage research into alternatives to prisons that both ensure the safety of society**, and enable the successful reintegration of individuals into society through the promotion of courses and activities, as well as reintegration into society.
- **Prioritize alternative sanctions (other than prison, e.g. community service) for certain non-violent crimes.**
- **Offer psychological treatment and/or psychotherapy to prisoners**, especially those suffering from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in combination with substance abuse,<sup>106</sup> including alternative treatments like meditation and mindfulness.
- **Ensure that juveniles are not detained with adults.**
- **Develop an education system that serves both short- and long-term offenders.** The curriculum should be varied, with particular emphasis on supplementing.
- **Ensure that prisoners undergoing strip searches are searched by same-sex officers.** For certain inmates subject to strict religious or cultural obligations, all necessary precautions and measures must be adopted not to cross sensitive boundaries. Officers must be aware of these requests in advance.
- **Provide cultural training for prison officers.** All staff should be trained to learn the techniques needed to work with multi-ethnic prison communities. A basic program should be implemented across the board. In prisons with a large

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<sup>105</sup> See, for example, Council of Europe, Policing Hate Crime against LGBTI persons: Training for a Professional Police Response, available at <https://rm.coe.int/prems-030717-gbr-2575-hate-crimes-against-lgbti-web-a4/1680723b1d>

<sup>106</sup> Overall, 51.4% of male young adult offenders and 43.6% of female offenders had a child psychiatric history. The population-attributable risk of criminality from childhood disorders was 20.6% for young adult female participants and 15.3% for male participants. See NCBI, Childhood psychiatric disorders and young adult crime, available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17974931>

number of people from different backgrounds incarcerated , a more intense cultural education programme could greatly enhance respect between inmates and officers.

## V. Guarantee Digital rights and freedom

In a society that is shaped by technology and connectivity, our online rights are essential to our democracy. Volt will work to guarantee citizens' rights on the internet and to enhance digital literacy and technological competence. Our freedom of expression and our economic, social and cultural rights depend on our ability to engage with technology. Volt will create a new type of policy and provide a forum to debate our common future with new technologies.

### A. Internet access

- **Push the European Union and European countries to invest more to ensure high-quality internet connectivity across Europe.**<sup>107</sup> This includes the fastest available mobile network connections and WiFi in urban and in rural areas, the most marginalised communities to the internet. The economic benefits of widespread connectivity should be encouraged, while ensuring that provision is equitable, fair and universal as a merit good or public good.

### B. Digital education

- **Increase the focus on teaching digital technological skills for all ages, including coding.** Online education must begin at an early age and progress toward life-long learning and vocational training, including an emphasis on mental health and social well-being given the impact of the digital environment.
- **Promote investment in lifelong adult education programmes with a focus occupational training.** As more and more jobs become redundant due to automation, more and more people will need to be retrained to work in new roles or to use new technologies. Digital literacy will therefore become increasingly important and requires greater investment. Occupational competence, or the idea that people should be able to develop their own interests when they have access to information and technology, should be part of a person's development throughout their life.

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<sup>107</sup> European Commission, Connectivity for a European Gigabit Society, available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/connectivity-european-gigabit-society-brochure>

- **Ensure that digital education has a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).** At the same time, creativity and the arts should be encouraged and fostered (STEAM - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) and exemplary public and civil society initiatives like WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) that work to empower women and girls in the sector through mentoring and peer-to-peer networks should be expanded.<sup>108</sup> Technical education must be used as a tool of social and professional inclusion that enables those who are underrepresented or marginalised in the field to excel, particularly in closing the gender gap in STEM or overcoming socio-economic obstacles.
- **Building a new political culture and vocabulary capable of debating and addressing new issues as they arise.** As technological progress accelerates, we will soon be confronted with issues that today we still consider far-fetched and unimaginable as technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) develop.

### **C. Digital single market**

- **Prioritise developing the digital single market,** so that companies and start-ups can take advantage of the 500 million consumers and the economies of scale that come with it, while also working with the EU and other European countries. New online forms of organisations must be taken into account, as well as the potential of alternative business models such as cooperatives and mutual societies.

### **D. Digital rights**

- **Push for a Digital Bill of Rights as a binding international legal instrument based on existing internet governance norms.**<sup>109</sup> To the extent that connectivity enables citizens to participate in society, this instrument would guarantee individual and social rights in a connected world, including the right to access the internet, and it will also protect related rights in the digital environment such as privacy, data protection, freedom of expression, information and association online, and stakeholder-based internet governance. Principles of Net Neutrality and an open internet are at the core of an internet system that guarantees these rights. Volt will advocate for the EU to include digital rights and freedoms in its agreements with third countries.

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<sup>108</sup> WISE, Campaign for Gender Balance in Science, Technology and Engineering, available at <https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/>

<sup>109</sup> IGF, The Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet, available at <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Opinion/Communications/InternetPrinciplesAndRightsCoalition.pdf>

- **Support and expand privacy and data protection, building on General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).**<sup>110</sup> Encryption is key to ensuring online privacy. Volt will work to promote encryption of online communications. While effective protection against threats of terrorism and crime is crucial, citizens must never accept mass surveillance as a norm, whether by state or non-state actors.
- **Advance and protect cybersecurity and digital rights** as new revolutionary technologies emerge in the coming era of the Internet of Things (IoT)<sup>111</sup> where smart grids, smart roads, smart hospitals and even smart furniture will determine crucial aspects of our lives.
- **Ensure that the principle of an open internet and freedom of expression, access, and information is compatible with the rights of authors and creators.** We need to strike a balance between fair rewards and incentives to individual creators and sustainable creative industries with widespread access for consumers. Writers, composers and other creators must be fairly compensated for their work, without overly limiting users' access and freedom of information on the internet.

## **E. Security and Safety**

- **Ensure the security of the internet** by fighting organised crime and security security threats, and ensuring global resilience against cyber attacks by non-state and state actors. This must be done through greater security cooperation between law enforcement authorities and online platforms, companies, and EU bodies such as EUROPOL and EUIPO.<sup>112</sup> Further measures must also be taken to combat online intimidation and harassment and its social implications, working together with online platforms and civil society groups.
- **Combate cyber attacks, disinformation campaigns and media manipulation.**
- **Work with global technology and social media companies** (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) to fight extremism in all its forms.
- **Hold social media companies accountable for spreading misinformation** like any other media platform.

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<sup>110</sup> European Commission, EU Data Protection Rules, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/eu-data-protection-rules\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/eu-data-protection-rules_en)

<sup>111</sup> The Guardian, Rise of the Machines, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/jun/06/internet-of-things-smart-home-smart-city>

<sup>112</sup> European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights, available at <https://euipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/web/observatory/about-us>

- **Ensure that EU citizens' data stored internationally is handled strictly in accordance to European standards** and is fully protected.
- **Pooling European efforts and resources for cyber defense.** Shift some resources from traditional military expenditure - such as personnel - to research and development (R&D) to develop European security know-how.<sup>113</sup>
- **Modernise the EU's strategic communication campaigns** to reflect the changing technological environment in the information age in order to effectively compete and defeat violent extremist propaganda campaigns.

## **F. Ethical approach**

- **Commit to an ethical, inclusive, rights-based approach to technological development.** Technological progress should be based on the principle of fairness, whereby the benefits of an innovation should be measured by the extent to which it benefits the most vulnerable, which is an important social criterion.

# **VI. Open-Source Solutions**

## **A. Open-Source Software (FLOSS)**

In the age of digital innovation, we must protect the safety and resiliency of the EU's digital infrastructure by allowing an ecosystem of FLOSS (free/libre and open source software, a form of software that allows users the freedom to use, adapt and redistribute the source code of software applications without having to pay a license fee) providers that drive innovation in a market that favours monopolies because revenues are not diminishing. To this end, we have to encourage replacement of proprietary software with open source solutions in public administration to create a transparent structure that reduces the risk of data breaches, unauthorised data use and dependence on proprietary providers. To facilitate this, Volt will:

- **Actively push for the introduction of a directive mandating EU services and institutions to migrate to FLOSS software.**
  - Create a platform for FLOSS software for public administration and mandate public officials to assess available solutions on the platform in terms of scope and cost, following the examples of implementation in

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<sup>113</sup> For more details see [EU Reform, External security and defence policy reform, Military & non-military capabilities](#)

Brazil<sup>114</sup> <sup>115</sup>, Canada<sup>116</sup>, and Italy<sup>117</sup>, before opting for proprietary software.

- Create a level playing field between research initiatives, communities, NGOs and private companies publishing FLOSS solutions by investing in visibility and budgetary assistance.
  - Designate publishers as service providers in FLOSS-based public tenders.
  - Recommend adoption at national level and raise awareness on the advantages of FLOSS software compared to proprietary solutions.
  - Assess the preferred systems from a security perspective, develop community-based EU security initiatives<sup>118</sup> and evaluate user-friendliness and accessibility.
  - Maintain a catalog of implementations (use cases) showing how the solutions are used in which context to quickly assess the available systems, their data analysis capabilities, their accessibility and their requirements.
- **Push for a bottom-up approach and empower public sector employees** through basic software development training to move from use to understanding.
- Start the transition from being able to use a solution to understanding how it actually works, creating the capacity to request enhancements for specific and evolving administrative needs.
  - Develop uniform and standardised requirements specifications and centrally controlled change management to establish common use patterns across all disciplines and a more homogeneous software ecosystem.
- **Define standards for administrative software solutions that** allow interoperability of different systems across departments and borders.
- Promote the adoption of existing FLOSS platforms in the EU institutions and facilitate the standardisation of software development according to the ISA directives<sup>119</sup>, with a particular focus on adapting the European

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<sup>114</sup> Ministério do planejamento, Software Público Brasileiro, available at <https://softwarepublico.gov.br/>

<sup>115</sup> Andy Oram, Open Source in Brazil, available at <https://www.oreilly.com/ideas/open-source-in-brazil>

<sup>116</sup> Government of Canada, Directive on Management of Information Technology, available at <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=15249>

<sup>117</sup> Adarsh Verma, Italian military adopts Open Source LibreOffice and saves 29 million, available at <http://fossbytes.com/italian-military-adopts-open-source-libreoffice-and-saves-29-million/>

<sup>118</sup> Joinup, EU-Free and Open Source Software Auditing Community, available at <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/eu-fossa-2>

<sup>119</sup> European Commission, About ISA<sup>2</sup>, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/isa2\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/isa2_en)

- Interoperability Reference Architecture (EIRA)<sup>120</sup> for technically, bureaucratically and legally interoperable development.
- Follow best practices<sup>121</sup> and move FLOSS projects for public administration software to publicly accessible platforms for code publication. Examples of such platforms include Gitlab and Github, but ideally this would be done on a new European platform that explicitly aims to foster collaboration between public administration developers, contributors and users, and takes more of a collaborative approach to development<sup>122</sup>.
- Emphasise on reliable and consistent data governance, including the management of data definitions in all EU languages.

## VII. Support Research

Research is the foundation of our current living standard, our economic prosperity and our political independence. Technical and scientific progress is necessary to guarantee our future prosperity and to meet the environmental and social challenges of tomorrow. Volt's science policy aims to create an even more innovative and competitive European research landscape, while respecting the EU's fundamental values, e.g. freedom and sustainability.

The EU's current scientific programme (Horizon 2020) aims to spend 3% of EU-wide GDP on research by 2020. However, given past and current dynamics, we are far away from meeting this goal.<sup>123</sup> The huge disparities in national research spending across Europe are particularly striking.<sup>124</sup>

In contrast, emerging countries such as India and China show impressive scientific development in international comparison. This is reflected not only in the increasing numbers of scientific publications, but also in the fact that China, for example, reportedly lists more patent applications than all OECD countries combined. The latest OECD figures on research spending also reveal that the EU average ranks below that of the US and China and, even more alarmingly, below that of the OECD average. This gives reason to intensify European research programmes.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> EIRA, About European Interoperability Reference Architecture, available at <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/european-interoperability-reference-architecture-eira/about>

<sup>121</sup> GitHub, National Security Agency, available at <https://github.com/NationalSecurityAgency>

<sup>122</sup> Joshua Tauberer, How I changed the law with a GitHub pull request, available at <https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2018/11/how-i-changed-the-law-with-a-github-pull-request/>

<sup>123</sup> OECD, Gross domestic spending on R&D, available at <https://data.oecd.org/rd/gross-domestic-spending-on-r-d.htm>

<sup>124</sup> European Commission, Interim Evaluation of Horizon 2020, available at [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/interim-evaluation-horizon-2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/interim-evaluation-horizon-2020_en)

<sup>125</sup> The World Bank, patent application, available at [http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?Report\\_Name=patent-application&Id=d484ab34](http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?Report_Name=patent-application&Id=d484ab34), For more details see [Relationship with other multilateral institutions](#)

- **Meet and increase Europe 2020 proposed 3 % spending targets** of EU-wide GDP on research. However, EU member states will most likely not reach this target. Therefore, we aim for an even higher target and propose that 4% of the EU-wide GDP is dedicated to research by 2025. This is necessary to remain internationally competitive and to guarantee our vision of a prosperous European future. Furthermore, increased research spending positively affects productivity and economic growth.<sup>126</sup>
- **Facilitate and support diverse forms of research funding**, because we are convinced that this is the best way to guarantee the freedom of science and at the same time create incentives for public and private funding institutions to engage in research in certain seminal areas. That is why we strive to involve not only government funding institutions, but also private foundations and companies. We aim to incentivise them to invest in research projects. Investments can either be of a general nature (like the German funding systems at universities), project-specific, or solution-orientated.
- **Support collaboration between universities and industry.** With respect to scientific approaches, strategies, funding, outcome exploitations, etc., both partners can learn and benefit from each other.<sup>127</sup> Ultimately, this will make research efforts more productive. Create a platform where companies and research groups can meet, exchange ideas, propose projects, consider research group publications<sup>128</sup> and develop trust and long-term relationships.<sup>129</sup>
- **Highlight innovative research priorities**, such as a European satellite system or renewable energy solutions, and incentive research in European clusters, with EU funding.
- **Promote and support European journals, conferences**, interdisciplinary academic exchange and national and European academic societies.

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<sup>126</sup> Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Fruits of R&D: Meta-analyses of the Effects of Research and Development on Productivity, available at <https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/1403389>

<sup>127</sup> Journal of Education and Work, Industry–University Collaboration for Continuing Professional Development, available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1363908032000093058>

<sup>128</sup> Universiteit Gent, Investigating the Factors That Diminish the Barriers to University–industry Collaboration, available at <https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/2051456>

<sup>129</sup> MIT Sloan Management Review, Best Practices for Industry-University Collaboration Greitzer, available at <https://osp.mit.edu/sites/osp/files/uploads/bestpractices.pdf>; Praxis Auril, Making industry-university partnerships work: Lessons from successful collaborations, available at <https://www.praxisunico.org.uk/resource/making-industry-university-partnerships-work-lessons-successful-collaborations>; PLOS one, Industry-university collaborations in Canada, Japan, the UK and USA–With emphasis on publication freedom and managing the intellectual property lock-up problem, available at <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0090302>

- **Found European research institutes** (e.g. European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL), European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)) and a European Informatics Laboratory.
- **Open technology incubators or technology parks for tech start-ups.** Focus on technology transfer to exploit the results, translation and centralised advice on patent issues.
- **Advocate for research and science to the public,** generate enthusiasm and motivate people to participate in research. Recruit foreign talent and researchers based on free and independent ethical research and occupational stability.
- **Expand European databases and innovate use of data** to promote new research directions.<sup>130</sup>
- **Support global research and innovation networks** and transform the EU into a global centre of excellence.
- **Introduce tax exemptions for R&D across the EU.** Provide public funding to research through sustainable financial instruments (debt and equity).

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<sup>130</sup> For example, Zenodo, Recent upload, available at <https://zenodo.org>