Volt

ELECTION

MANIFESTO

BERLIN 2021

at a glance

FUTURE ✶✶✶ MADE IN EUROPE

WHY IS A EUROPEAN PARTY STANDING IN BERLIN?

Des People from across Europe have decided that it is time to stand up for shared ideals and to take action beyond national borders. This was the spark that brought Volt into being. The movement has been growing since then in all European countries, regions and cities and since last year, we have also been represented as a regional party association in Berlin.

We are campaigning throughout Europe for better climate protection, social justice, a sustainable economy, digital progress, greater citizen participation, a shared European democracy

To this end, Volt teams from many nations are working together, supporting one another and shaping policy across national borders.

Berlin will benefit from this as looking at what our European neighbours are already doing is worthwhile: across the whole of Europe there are already creative solutions for local challenges, examples of best practice: here in Berlin, we are advocating for more public housing as there is in Vienna, digital public services like there are in Sweden, traffic calming like in Barcelona and lifelong learning as there is in Estonia.

Volt sees itself as an alternative to the politics of populism: we want to answer complex questions with carefully crafted solutions and, in so doing, bring about a solution-focussed, evidenced-based, pragmatic and forward-facing type of politics. In order to live up to these ambitions, as a young political party we have laid down five priorities for this Berlin election manifesto: digitalisation, administration, education, housing and mobility. Our election manifesto was drafted by enthusiastic volunteers in collaboration with experts, professionals and civil society organisations. The result is a vision for our city - by Berliners for Berliners.

Many of the challenges facing our city can only be solved by working together with others across Germany and Europe. We therefore also recommend reading our election manifesto for the Bundestag elections, which is available on **voltdeutschland.org.**

BRINGING EUROPE TO LIFE

In order to create a united Europe, we have to overcome borders and re-think what "home" means. Berlin can play a large contribution to this by welcoming people from all countries and giving EU citizens a greater say in shaping the city. Europe is our common heritage and our common future.

Greater exchange and involvement at the European level

- We want people to be able to have greater influence on decisions made at the European level. We will promote and build upon European collaborations (e.g. as a member of the EUROCITIES network). Citizens should be informed better and included in joint projects.

Welcoming European citizens to Berlin

- Through the introduction of Welcome Desks we will offer newly arrived Berliners information and support to manage administrative tasks. Additionally, we want to introduce a volunteer "buddy" system to help new arrivals find their feet more easily: long-term Berlin residents will be available as a point of contact and support.

Celebrating Europe Day

- Berlin is a modern and cosmopolitan metropolis in the heart of Europe that has a diverse and international population. Our city is also a symbol of European unity between the East and the West. We therefore plan the introduction of Europe Day as a public holiday in Berlin on 9 May. By doing so we want to celebrate Europe and the cultural diversity across the continent and to remember our shared history.

Supporting the participation of European citizens

- Every day, citizens devote their time and energy in a diversity of ways for a better and shared Europe. We want to actively support their commitment and expand cooperation to encourage the exchange of ideas and to promote shared growth in Europe.

ACTIVATING THE CITY THROUGH DIGITALISATION

Digitalisation is transforming our society. We want to steer this change in a direction that serves citizens and brings our society together - for example through high-speed internet, promoting start-ups and research, as well as the expansion of digital citizen participation.

Harnessing and driving forward digital progress

- To harness the potential for **positive developments in our society through digitalisation**, we want to provide targeted support in Berlin for important areas. These include the Internet of Things, Smart City projects and the STEM-subjects.
- Successful digitalisation can only work when strict **data protection, data security** and **open data standards** are maintained.

Berlin as a successful base for start-ups

- Berlin should be made more attractive for international professionals, as well as researchers and students. We therefore want to promote and build upon Berlin's status as a **European start-up hub**.
- We plan to have a **digital platform** upon which all the important information, forms and contact people for start-ups can be found in one place. There will be a special focus on practical and legal advice around applying for **funding opportunities**.
- We want to provide targeted support for **young businesses** to **network and connect** through "Digital Innovation Hubs" and opportunities to share and exchange at the European level.
- We plan to tie state aid for companies to **environmental** and **social conditions**.

High-speed internet in every household

- We call for **high-speed internet** for every household and every business in Berlin. In order to achieve this, we will improve the technical conditions, re-organise co-ordination on the borough level, and drive forward the **expansion of fibre optic and 5G networks**.

Data protection and digital security

- We call for **data protection** to be optimised through efficient and effective measures. This also includes regular data protection re-evaluations in public bodies.
- The prioritisation of **server locations within the EU** is important to us.
- In the area of data protection and data security we will work towards **improved training for employees** in Berlin's public administration, schools and other municipal organisations.
- We want to provide greater support to the city's **IT Service Centre** (ITDZ).

Greater digital self-determination through open source and modern infrastructure

- We plan to develop a European strategy to **promote open source products**.
- In addition, we will drive forward the development of an **open, European Cloud infrastructure**.

Using libraries as a versatile community resource

- So that all citizens have **equal access to digital opportunities**, we want to expand the role of libraries as **places of digital learning and working**. For this to be possible, **optimal internet connectivity** is a necessity.

Strengthening civil society through greater participation

- We call for **citizens** to be **actively included** in decision-making processes, including in urban development. For this purpose, we want to make the platform mein.berlin.de the central point of contact for urban development.
- We will support the creation of **citizens' assemblies** at a state-wide and borough level.
- We plan to allow a **greater say in the distribution of public funds** through participatory citizens' budgets.
- We will support **European collaborations**, more grassroots projects, and the further development of **digital citizen participation**.

RE-THINKING BERLIN'S PUBLIC SERVICES

The public sector is at the service of all of this city's citizens. Our goal is for Berlin's public administration to become a shining example for public authorities across Germany - e.g. through individual support for citizens, online administrative procedures and digital and innovation-friendly structures.

Using digitalisation in public services

- By **establishing a Senate Department for Digitalisation** (SenD) we plan to drive forward the digitalisation of the city and its administration. We want to **bundle together** the previously scattered **responsibilities** for digital questions in one place at the SenD.
- Through wide-ranging publication and standardisation of **open data** we want to put as much information as possible at the disposal of citizens and companies.
- We want to ensure that **digital services** are always **accessible** and **easy-to-use**. People who need assistance accessing digital services should receive quick and individual support. We also plan to greatly improve the **multilingual offering** on the berlin.de website.

Forward-looking and sustainable administrative structures

- We call for the Executive Borough Councillors (Bezirksstadträt*innen) to be elected in the future by the local borough assembly (Bezirksverordnetenversammlung) by majority vote (so-called "**political local authority**").
- We want to introduce a right for borough mayors to issue instructions to Executive Borough Councillors. This includes access to areas of business of the local authority such as finance, HR, and organisational change.
- In order to better distribute their responsibilities, we want to **raise the number of Executive Councillors** in each borough from five to six..
- We plan to have a **comprehensive reform** of all business processes, so that these can be structured as efficiently, effectively and legally secure as possible. This also includes the introduction of **modern (open source) software solutions** across the board.

- We call for a **climate-neutral administration by 2035**. In the procurement of goods and services by the public sector, **sustainability and climate-friendliness** should serve as **important selection criteria**.

A future-proof plan for staffing

- We want to fill vacant positions as soon as possible to ensure a **future-proof administration**. This is the only way to manage the fact that a third of the current employees in the state and borough administrations are due to retire by 2029.
- In order to reach as many people as possible, we plan to expand the **recognition of international educational qualifications** and to simplify the process for **career-changes from the private sector**.
- To make Berlin's public sector a more attractive employer, we want to enable **working from home** and **flexible working** as well as strengthening the **right to part-time working**. We also advocate **flexible chances for progression** and **transparent career paths**.
- In order to strengthen the exchange of ideas and cross-departmental thinking within the public administration we will promote **job rotation within the administration** as well as national and **European exchange programmes**.

My city Berlin - a safe future

- Improved crime prevention is important for us, so that all Berliners can feel safe. We also want to **increase the police clearance rate** (i.e. the number of cases where a suspect is identified) and to **step up cooperation** with the **Federal Criminal Police Office**. We call for **sufficient positions** in the police to be **created** and **filled**.
- We attach importance to combat the networks of criminal systems as a whole. To this end, we want to drive forward **European solutions** and to establish **opt-out programmes** for those who wish to leave organised crime.
- Through information and awareness-raising campaigns, as well as civic education with the police force, we will **stop right-wing extremism in its tracks**. We will promote **trust and understanding** between the police and citizens through the **introduction of dialogue forums**.
- We are critical of wide-ranging encroachments on and restrictions of civil liberties on the basis of possible risks of terrorism. We are **against** the use of **video surveillance without substantive grounds**. We also call for a **strict ban** on the use of **automatic facial recognition technologies** in public spaces.

- Existing staffing shortages and the failure to digitalise are the principal reasons that **Berlin's justice system** has been overloaded for years. We call for more **diversity** amongst staff and **adequate staffing numbers**. We plan to **introduce electronic records** well before 2026 as well as the expansion of **online judicial services**.

CREATING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

We want to create an inclusive and progressive educational system that supports equality of opportunity. It should no longer make any difference what social or cultural background a person has. We want to enable every individual to develop freely. All generations should be able to receive education at interdisciplinary places of learning and to prepare themselves for the pressing questions of the future. We want to promote and expand the opportunities for life-long learning.

Equality of opportunity from the start - pregnancy and early years education as a cornerstone of successful learning

- We plan to **increase funding** for the training of **midwives and early years educators**, as well as improving their pay and legal conditions.
- We want to see optimal **joined-up working** between midwives, obstetricians, paediatricians, social workers, psychotherapists and (child) psychiatrists.
- We want to promote the implementation of **scientific findings** and concepts in child daycare and call, e.g., for **free training** of educators in public and independent sector daycare providers.
- In order to **assign free daycare places more efficiently** via the KiTa-Navigator platform, we plan to have completely digitised data gathering of the actual number of daycare places required.
- We call for **more flexible** and **longer core hours** in all daycare providers from 7 am to 6 pm as well as an expansion of provision during peripheral hours and at the weekend.

Innovative and digital concepts in teaching

- We call for age-appropriate educational resources for **IT and media skills** to be introduced, as well as for the **necessary hardware** to be made available.
- We support improved **training for teachers** in IT and media skills, e.g. through paid leave to attend training and for IT professionals to be deployed to schools.
- We will **support** the **infrastructure development** as well as common **data protection and security protocols**.

- We want to see **comprehensive environmental education** at daycare facilities and schools, as well as the integration of **climate research** and **sustainable management** in all university curricula.

Improving school-based learning for all

- We call for complex educational work to be distributed amongst **multi-professional teams.**
- We believe it is important and necessary to introduce a **more flexible curriculum**, which can be adapted to world events, the needs of learners, and the group situation.
- We want to reform the policy on **continuing professional development** for teachers, with a stronger focus on current topics as well as on skills-orientated and project-based learning.
- We want to reduce grades-based assessment and to supplement this with a feedback system, which is focussed on pupils' **personal strengths and abilities**.

I want to give children and young people a voice - starting from birth. For more equal opportunities in Berlin.
Carolin Behr, Top candidate House of Representatives

- We plan to improve **early detection** and sustainable support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with learning difficulties.

Making on-the-job training more attractive

- We call for the **improvement of training conditions**, such as fair working hours and living wages.
- We want to review the existing curricula for professional training and expand these to include the acquisition of **transdisciplinary** and **digital skills**.
- We support the expansion of hybrid **training models for migrants** at the public adult education centres, where integration courses are combined with workplace training.

Universities as a place of critical thinking and independent research

- The **independence of teaching materials** or **research results** must also be guaranteed where educational institutions enter into cooperation with private companies.
- We want to **promote scientific works** and teaching materials, and to support authors and lecturing staff, where teaching or research has a perspective other than a Western Europe-centric one.
- We call for the development of **equality policies,** to support people with a migration background, of different genders, minorities and people with dis_ abilities in teaching and research.

Enabling lifelong learning

- As central places of lifelong learning for all citizens, we want to support an expansion in the offer of **adult education centres** and their funding.
- We want to support **multilingual course offerings** as well as courses in simple language, in which people from different cultural backgrounds can meet together.
- We want to encourage companies through financial and tax assistance to offer more **training for employees** in the future.

A DIVERSE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOR ALL

Culture is a fundamental cornerstone of democracy and society and it is the core of Berlin's spirit of freedom. Berlin is home to creative diversity, a lively and varied club scene as well as historical memorial sites. Our goals are to maintain and promote this diverse cultural landscape.

Cultural promotion - creating long-term perspectives

- We want to establish a **long-term plan for cultural funding** that will give all funding recipients greater certainty to plan.
- We will work towards increasing the funding for **European cultural partnerships**.

The club scene - a hallmark of Berlin

- We want to **promote** and **preserve Berlin's club scene**. In particular, we want to find solutions with the construction of new buildings that will allow both the continuing existence of the clubs and sensible urban development.
- We call for a **Berlin "Open-Air Party Law"**.

Uncomplicated support in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

- We want to continue to provide **targeted support** to **artists** and **events industry workers** for as long as their livelihoods are at threat due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We call for **assistance** to be available in the future with **minimal bureaucracy** whilst maintaining **transparency** and **legal security**.

Re-appraising German colonial history

- We call for an active and in-depth **confrontation with German colonial history**.
- We want the **origins** of works of art from the colonial period to be comprehensively **documented** in our museums.
- We support artefacts, human remains and works of art from the colonial period being **returned to their place of origin** if the groups concerned wish this.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR BERLIN

Berlin should be a home for all its citizens. A city in which no-one is left behind. Diverse urban planning must guarantee discrimination-free spaces and a safe home for all. Equality does not mean the simple absence of discrimination but also participation and self-development in all parts of society. Together we can build a home in which everyone feels safe and free. Only in diversity are we united.

Promoting an inclusive society

- **Equality** is not a separate topic for us but a **fundamental condition for our entire thinking and action**.
- All forms of **discrimination** must be **prevented**. This is especially the case for discrimination towards women, LGBTQI+ people, people with different skin colours or nationalities, refugees, members of religious communities, seniors and people with dis_abilites or with different social status.
- We want to make **urban planning more inclusive**. In particular, spatial separation between different social groups must be avoided.
- We support **living wages** and greater **social mobility**. This also includes combating child poverty as well as the inclusion for freelancers, those in self-employment as well as small enterprises in the social security system.
- We advocate for **neutral** and **independent counselling** surrounding abortion.

A roof over everyone's head

- We are committed to the **right to humane and dignified housing** for all people.
- We want to see solidarity by the community through greater investment in **social** and **sustainable house-building**. The provision of adequate **housing stock for particularly disadvantaged groups** ("protected market segment") should be observed.
- We want to bundle expertise and responsibilities into interdisciplinary specialist units and to prioritise **preventing and combating homelessness**.
- "Housing First" is a proven concept in sustainably reducing homelessness. We want to significantly expand **"Housing First" in Berlin** based upon the example of Finland.

- Homelessness in Berlin is also an international problem that therefore needs to be solved comprehensively and preferably across the whole of Europe. To this end, we will develop **transregional strategies** in collaboration with our European neighbours.

HOUSING – A HUMAN RIGHT

Volt calls for an adequate supply of affordable housing in Berlin, for varied and lively neighbourhoods, as well as for climate-friendly living and extensive ecological construction. This is how we create not just housing but space for living ⬚ for all Berliners.

Affordable housing in Berlin

- We want to **support** the **not-for-profit housing sector**, to ensure we have a long-term adequate supply of affordable housing for all Berliners. To this end, we want to strengthen **municipal housing associations** and **co-operatives** as well as **new forms of communal living**.
- We will introduce **free, public advisory services** for renters and will ensure the consistent implementation of the rental price break. Additionally we want to establish a comprehensive **online portal** to calculate and monitor rent prices.
- Using the income from a graduated **special levy on rents** above the comparable rental level in the local area (except for new builds), we want to support people on low incomes.
- We also endorse an **increase in housing allowance** in line with the current rental prices to support people on low incomes. We believe it is important that Berliners can live in the part of the city where they work or have their social network.
- We call for existing **social conservation areas** to be preserved and for new ones to be created, in order to preserve the structure and diversity of the population.
- By creating a digital **real estate register** we want to ensure there is more **transparency** in the rental market and at the same time support the fight against real estate money laundering.
- We are critical of the rental cap, which was overturned in April 2021, as it put the brakes on desperately needed environmental and structural modernisations, punished moderate landlords, and put municipal housing associations and cooperatives into financial difficulty.

Building new homes

- We want to **reform construction law in line with the Dutch model**. By reducing bureaucracy, construction processes should be simplified and sped up, thereby reducing costs.

- We will plan to have **proportionate levels of re-densification** and the **construction of new buildings** by using already sealed-off and unused spaces. Fresh air corridors, parks and green spaces must be retained.
- We call for new halls of residence and affordable private housing for **students and apprentices**.
- We want to encourage the provision of **company-owned accommodation** to combat the lack of accommodation and skilled professionals and to allow for short commuting distances.
- We plan a land policy that will ensure construction follows **social** and **environmental criteria.** We will do this through the **expansion of the Berlin land fund** and by increasing the award of leasehold rights.

Black and white thinking does not help with housing policy. We need good solutions that are legally secure and sustainable.
Steffen Daniel Meyer,
Top candidate House of Representatives

- For the **Tempelhofer Feld** we plan to have a concept that alongside **park and natural conservation areas**, **art and cultural events** and **leisure and sporting** also integrates some accommodation through social housing construction at the edge of the site. We believe it is a sensible idea to hold a new referendum for this.

Climate-neutral construction and housing
- We advocate reaching **climate neutrality in construction and housing by 2035**. In order to achieve this we want to see **resource-saving and climate-friendly construction** and support the use of sustainable construction materials.
- We plan a comprehensive, **sustainable orientation for house-building** by increasing the installation of **domestic solar panels** and the use of **low-emission sources of heating**.
- We will drive forward the **expansion of the district heating network** and push strongly for **obsolete heating systems to be replaced**.
- We advocate a reform of funding programmes across Germany for **energy modernisation** of buildings. We aim to see a modernisation rate of 4%.
- We want to **improve the city climate** by greening rooftops and facades as well as making it compulsory for every new building to create new green spaces.

Incentives for a fair and social housing market in Berlin
- We advocate the **reduction of land transfer tax for personal use**. At the same time we want to ensure that **tax advantages upon sale** are linked to previous **personal use**. We will prevent **tax avoidance** through so-called Share Deals.
- We support a **reform of land tax** according to the land value model as an incentive for an efficient use of land and the building of new housing.
- We emphatically call for approaches that **prevent discrimination** in house-hunting, such as against people with dis_abilities, queer people, single parents, or those who are discriminated against due to their name.

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CLIMATE-FRIENDLY AND EQUITABLE MOBILITY

We want to see transport policies in which environmentally-friendly means of transport are at the forefront of traffic planning and management: cycling, walking and the use of local public transport should be made safer, faster and more attractive to enable comfortable, efficient and sustainable mobility in the city. Volt would like to see a Berlin where we can all move freely and safely and in which we can all breathe freely.

Traffic calming for a livable city
- Through targeted support for neighbourhood blocks we want to reduce noise pollution, improve air quality and increase quality of life. Like in Barcelona, through-traffic should be reduced in the neighbourhood, without restricting the mobility of local residents.
- In order to achieve high levels of traffic calming, we will promote **car-free zones** and **hybrid street use**, e.g. through bans on through-traffic for cars at certain times of the day.
- By **expanding digital opportunities for participation**, we want to increase the involvement of affected citizens in the planning and implementation of traffic calming measures.

Room for diversity in means of transportation
- We want to expand **bicycle parking spaces** and **Park & Ride** facilities in order to simplify changing between modes of transport.
- We call for all **transport sharing services** to be offered on a shared digital platform. These should also be expanded, particularly outside of the S-Bahn ring.

Equality and safety in mobility
- Our goal is to develop an **inclusive mobility strategy**. London shows how such strategies can be developed and implemented through efficient **data collection**.
- We call for the consistent **expansion of accessibility improvements** to the Berlin transport system.
- We want to adjust the **ticketing structure** and the **route network** to the needs of all, particularly to those of disadvantaged groups.

Walking - a healthy alternative
- To make walking more attractive, we will expand **"meeting zones"** and **pedestrian areas** with non-commercial seating.
- The safety of pedestrians should be increased through **physical separation of pavements from cycle paths and motorised traffic**.
- We plan a general higher **prioritisation of walking** in urban planning.

Berlin as a bicycle city
- In order to be able to **cycle well and safely** in Berlin, we want to expand infrastructure based on the Dutch model of cycle paths.
- **Pop-up cycle paths** can only serve as a temporary solution, which should be **made permanent as soon as possible**.
- We call for **express cycle paths** and **bicycle underpasses**.
- To ease swapping cars for bicycles, we plan to introduce an easily accessible **funding programme for cargo bikes**.

Making public transport more attractive
- We want to expand **public transport infrastructure** to allow a **10-minute-frequency as standard** and under five minutes during rush hour periods.
- The focus should be on projects to provide **frequent connections in the outer boroughs** as well as for **call-a-bus services** among other things to provide better connections to the areas surrounding the city. In the future the use of **autonomous minibuses** could be considered here.
- In order to drive forward climate protection in a timely way, we want to see the bus fleet retrofitted to **climate neutral and low-emission drive systems** by 2030 at the latest and the extensive conversion of traffic lanes into (express) bus lanes.
- We want to ensure **passenger ferries** are sustainable and low-emission .

For sustainable motorised private transport
- To achieve **Vision Zero** (zero road deaths), we plan to introduce a **30 km/h speed limit as standard** in inner city areas, as has already been successfully implemented in Helsinki.
- Public spaces should be distributed more fairly. We want to see a **reduction of car parking spaces** and **parking charges that cover the costs** of these.
- To reduce car traffic, we want to introduce a **social and fair city toll (congestion charge)**, the design of which will be developed by an **expert committee** with **citizen involvement**.

- We plan to rapidly expand the **charging infrastructure** for electric vehicles, based on need.

Taking a comprehensive view for road-based deliveries

- For **innovative and environmentally friendly deliveries**, so-called **City Hubs** (micro distribution centres) need to be strengthened and used extensively.
- Additionally, we want to see deliveries occur primarily during **off-peak hours** and to **convert parking spaces into delivery zones**. Cooperation platforms for companies can help companies **prevent empty journeys for goods vehicles**.

Are you missing something?

Thank you for taking the time to read through our election programme. You can find our national election programme with many more pan-European, pragmatic and progressive solutions at **voltdeutschland.org**. In the future, we plan to prepare position papers on other issues and publish them on our website.

Are you missing something? Is there a topic that is particularly close to your heart? Then the solution is very simple: Join us.

www.voltberlin.org

Volt