

Volt



Short Election Programme

Local Elections 2025 in Düsseldorf

Europe's

best ideas

for our City

FUTURE  MADE IN EUROPE

Short Election Programme for the 2025 Local Elections - Volt Düsseldorf

Our leading candidates

For the Düsseldorf City Council

Anne Hahn



When I came to Düsseldorf in 1999, I immediately fell in love with the city: the openness and zest for life of the Rhinelanders, the international flair. A few years later, I turned this enthusiasm into a career and became a city guide and integration teacher. After the birth of my children, I no longer wanted to “just” showcase our city, but actively shape it as a member of the city council. I want to help make us and our city fit and resilient for a challenging future and be a strong voice for those who will be most affected by this future: our children.

Patrick Mehmet Biermann

Düsseldorf has been my home for eight years—I live in Oberbilk and work in Golzheim. Growing up in precarious circumstances, I experienced how affordable housing, good education, and social security determine whether one can succeed in rising to the middle class. Today, I see how many people in Düsseldorf are reaching their limits – especially in a housing market that increasingly excludes rather than connects. I am running for office because I want to ensure that this city offers space for everyone in the future – not just for those who can afford it.



Ramona Horlitz



I have been living with my family in Angermund for 23 years. In my political work, I want to combine my professional experience from various levels of the healthcare sector with my legal knowledge. I am particularly interested in services and education related to mental health, especially in the areas of education and training. I want Düsseldorf to be a city for everyone: barrier-free and inclusive, protective of minorities, and equipped to face the challenges of climate change. This necessarily includes reliable public transportation connections—even on the outskirts of the city.

Danny Müller

I am committed to a Düsseldorf that combines economic strength with ecological responsibility. To achieve this, it is important that we modernize our infrastructure, make our administration digitally capable, and promote an economy that combines innovation and sustainability. Our living space needs to be reimaged—with better bus and train connections, safe bike paths, and accessibility throughout the city. Green spaces, more trees, and cooling open spaces make Düsseldorf a great place to live—especially in times of climate change. My goal: a city that actively shapes change and creates opportunities for everyone.



Photos: [Sven Vüllers Fotografie](#)

We in Düsseldorf: United in diversity

A strong community for everyone.

In times like these, even optimistic Rhinelanders find it difficult not to lose hope. Sick leave due to mental stress is reaching record levels, and up to a quarter of children and adolescents report mental health problems¹. Yet health is the foundation for education, work, and social participation. That is why we place the physical and mental well-being of Düsseldorf's residents at the center of our policies.

We want to strengthen cohesion and community spirit in Düsseldorf and ensure that everyone in the city can find suitable initiatives and networks to get involved in. After all, people who feel part of a community are less susceptible to radical ideologies. We are firmly opposed to all forms of discrimination and extremism and want all people in Düsseldorf to feel accepted and seen in their uniqueness – regardless of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or origin.

Guiding principles and visions

Healthy Düsseldorf: We are calling for a Düsseldorf Mental Health Action Day, a fixed day on which everything in public institutions and schools revolves around mental health. We see a great need for education regarding neurodiversities such as ADHD and autism. We also want to better prevent all types of addiction through targeted prevention measures.

Social cohesion and civic engagement: All Düsseldorf residents should have a say in how the city spends its money. That is why we are introducing the Düsseldorf-Budget of €1 million, which anyone can apply for. The final allocation will be decided by digital voting. We also want to strengthen the city's many associations and initiatives and improve their networking via the Düsseldorf app so that even more people can benefit from their valuable services.

Equal opportunities and diversity: We call for the consistent use of anonymous applications for jobs with the city, as this has been shown to encourage a more diverse pool of applicants and increase the number of people from underrepresented groups in public service. We want to improve the financial situation of women's counseling centers, provide free menstrual products in government offices and schools, and set up emergency overnight and weekend childcare for single parents.

¹<https://nachrichten.idw-online.de/2024/12/04/psychische-gesundheit-von-kindern-und-jugendliche-n-durch-globale-krisen-belastet>

Inclusion and removal of barriers: Among other things, we advocate for plain language in administration, the expansion of accessible Rheinbahn stops, and voting rights for the Disability Council in the city council.

LGBTQ+: We are horrified to see the rise in anti-LGBTQ crimes and demand increased protection for the LGBTQ community. We are campaigning for a nursing home for LGBTQ people in need of care and for more staff at the specialist center for rainbow families.

Migration and Integration: The integration of new neighbors into urban society is a top priority. We are setting up a special budget to finance more flexible German language courses, promoting networking among migrant initiatives, and enabling communication with authorities in English.

Combating discrimination and extremism: Düsseldorf is colourful and diverse. But even here, the threat posed by extremist groups is growing. When it comes to preventing extremism, we focus on education and training student mentors who can recognize and address extremist tendencies and discrimination in the classroom at an early stage.

Homelessness Task Force: Housing is a human right that everyone is entitled to. We are committed to a holistic, people-centered drug and social policy—inspired by successful models from Zurich, Vienna, and Helsinki. The successful “Housing First” concept will be further expanded to effectively combat homelessness in Düsseldorf.

Culture and leisure: We support the construction of the new opera house on the condition that it becomes a place of encounter and dialogue for everyone. With a branch of the Clara Schumann Music School, rehearsal rooms and a stage for bands and choirs. In the old building of the Luisengymnasium, we are creating a makerspace, creative rooms and workshops for young people aged 10 and above.

Sport literally brings us together. We want all Düsseldorf residents to have access to suitable sporting activity and support sports clubs in a number of ways: for example, by introducing the Düsseldorf budget of €1 million per year, which clubs can also apply for. To counteract the shortage of coaches, Düsseldorf schools are to offer the first level of trainer training. We are also helping to open eSports departments in sports clubs, thereby attracting young people to the clubs who have not previously felt drawn to traditional sports activities.

Best Practice: Participatory budgeting as in Munich

With the Munich Budget 2025, all Munich residents aged 14 and over have the opportunity to directly participate in decisions on a budget of €1 million. Proposals on how the budget should be invested, either in whole or in part, can be submitted via a digital participation platform. After submission, the proposals are reviewed by the city administration for feasibility and provided with a cost estimate. The proposals are then put to a vote. The selected projects are implemented within a defined period of time.

Düsseldorf

Kids and Teens

Empowered for the future.

Anyone shaping the politics of tomorrow must also listen to the voices of tomorrow. That's why we aim to significantly expand youth participation and include the interests of children and young people in all local political processes in Düsseldorf. They are the generation that will live longest with the consequences of today's decisions—decisions whose impact often unfolds years or decades later.

We want all young people in Düsseldorf to have the opportunity to get involved—whether at school, in a club, at a youth center, or in politics. To make this possible, we are promoting a massive expansion of sports and leisure activities. A strong social network is the best tool against loneliness—something more than half of all young people in North Rhine-Westphalia reportedly experience at least occasionally. And loneliness makes people more vulnerable to radical ideas and leads to a loss of trust in democracy. That's why we are committed to combating youth isolation and improving their opportunities to connect with others.

Guiding Values and Vision

Our youngest – ages 0 to 6: We will make the allocation of daycare spots via the Kita Navigator more transparent, expand low-threshold counseling services through social workers in daycares, and tackle the shortage of educators. We are advocating for more and easier training opportunities for educators and the immigration of qualified professionals. We help clubs create affordable sports offerings for toddlers and integrate them early into a sports club.

Elementary school children: Elementary school lays the foundation for becoming self-determined members of society. We aim to instill an early awareness of the importance of social cohesion and support all ideas that better connect schools to their local neighborhoods—such as cleanup and renovation projects, partnerships with senior centers, company visits, and more. We also want to strengthen boys' programs, media literacy for children and parents, and ensure kids feel safe and independent while moving through the city.

Teens in town: We want "Feel Good Guides" in every Düsseldorf classroom. We want to help clubs establish eSports departments and transform the old building of the Luisengymnasium on Bastionsstraße into a creative space where youth aged 12 and up can explore arts and crafts with support from experienced mentors. We also support integrating secondary schools more deeply into neighborhoods, especially to support socially disadvantaged youth. We want to create informal meeting spaces—without pedagogical supervision—such as a new outdoor pool in District 3.

Children in Power – Political Co-Determination: We're strengthening the Participation Service Center to develop new political participation formats in cooperation with youth. We propose a €100,000 under-25 budget for projects that children and youth decide on themselves. We want regular exchanges between student parliaments and local councils to discuss youth issues in each district.

Best Practice: Addiction Prevention in Iceland 🇮🇸

To combat rampant alcohol and drug use, Iceland launched a nationwide prevention program in the late 1990s. The government tightened youth protection laws and encouraged teens and parents to spend leisure time meaningfully—as a family or in clubs. By 2016, only 5% of 15-16-year-olds drank alcohol monthly, and just 3% smoked daily.

Best Practice: Superblocks in Barcelona 🇪🇺 🇪🇸

Barcelona revolutionized urban life with its “Superillas” (Superblocks). Multiple street sections were closed to through traffic and transformed into playgrounds, green spaces, and bike lanes. Cars can enter at no more than 7 km/h. Children can move safely and independently.

Air quality, noise, and safety perceptions improved dramatically. By 2030, Barcelona plans 503 more Superblocks, developed with strong community involvement and receiving widespread support.

Our Düsseldorf: Fit for the Future

Our vision for the smart city of tomorrow.

While many positive changes have occurred in recent years, Düsseldorf still has major gaps in climate adaptation and citizen services. We want urban planning that anticipates future climate and social challenges—planning not just until the next election. We will reverse past planning mistakes by unsealing unnecessary concrete surfaces and planting city-wide microforests to provide cooling, foster social interaction, and promote dialogue.

We envision a smart city administration that becomes a service-oriented partner to its residents through digital transformation. We will launch a Düsseldorf App that connects services, support programs, and initiatives—and uses AI to guide residents to the exact services relevant to their current needs. This saves nerves, resources, builds trust in government, and strengthens democracy.

Guiding Values and Vision

Digitalization and Smart City: We envision a dynamic digital ecosystem that connects people and empowers everyone to participate in society and politics. This includes citywide free Wi-Fi, an app that integrates city information, virtual administrative visits, digital participation formats, and smart solutions for lighting, public transport, and traffic control.

Livable Düsseldorf: We aim to implement traffic-calmed residential neighborhoods modeled after Barcelona's Superblocks, which eliminate through traffic and promote neighborhood interactions. The Glasmacherviertel is a prime candidate for this model.

Opera House rebuild: We support building a socially just opera house for all Düsseldorf residents—but not at the expense of social or climate programs. It should be a space for inclusive music experiences and lifelong learning, including hosting the Clara Schumann Music School, rehearsal spaces, and exhibits on Düsseldorf's music history to generate additional income.

Green City and Climate Adaptation: We want a climate-resilient Düsseldorf for all generations. A city that meets the climate crisis head-on—with more greenery, unsealing of surfaces, "cool spots," fair heating transitions, and sustainable planning. Green spaces reduce heat, clean the air, create community, and enhance quality of life.

Makerspace: We'll establish the first city-operated makerspace, centrally located (e.g., in the old Luisengymnasium or the new opera house). A publicly accessible hub for collaborative innovation and repair, equipped with 3D printers, laser cutters, CNC machines, and staffed by experts. It promotes sustainability, innovation, and tech education.

Safety: Volt promotes a city of safety, respect, and social cohesion. Through smart lighting, visible public safety, extremism prevention, and forward-thinking planning, we strengthen safety without fear or exclusion—through trust, good infrastructure, and collective action.

Cleanliness: Düsseldorf should be a city where cleanliness is an expression of consideration, responsibility and solidarity. Through waste prevention, clear standards, smart organisation and active participation, we create clean streets, parks and events. Because cleanliness starts small – and has an impact on the entire cityscape.

Animal Welfare: We aim to create a livable environment not just for people, but also for animals—pets, livestock, wild animals, and insects—by promoting animal-friendly habitats and encouraging compassionate, respectful treatment of all creatures.

Best Practice: Vienna App and EMMA in Gelsenkirchen

With over 1 million downloads and a user satisfaction rating of over 80%, Vienna's 'Wien App' is an excellent example of a municipal app that really simplifies life: With digital administrative procedures, easy access to information via the integrated WienBot and voice input, a city map with all relevant information, event tips, digital membership cards for libraries, etc., it has established itself as an indispensable tool in the everyday lives of many Viennese residents. Through continuous development and adaptation to the needs of its users, the 'Wien App' is a model for modern city administration and communication and our best practice for the Düsseldorf app.

Gelsenkirchen is currently introducing the first smart AI assistant in citizen services for digital application processing, called 'EMMA'. From 2026, it will help citizens with their concerns and applications and receive and process enquiries. This will speed up administrative processes and relieve administrative staff of routine tasks so that they can concentrate on more complex issues.

Housing and Construction

Housing is a human right:

For a fair, people-centered, and sustainable city.

Düsseldorf is a wealthy city – but more and more people can no longer afford to live here. While the demand for housing has risen steadily in recent years, the municipal target of building 6,000 new homes per year has been significantly missed: in 2023, only around 3,300 new homes were built (source: LhD, Office for Statistics). What is particularly dramatic is that less than a third of these new buildings are in the affordable or publicly subsidised housing segment. Instead, apartments in the upmarket or luxury segment are being built mainly in inner-city locations.

At the same time, rents are rising significantly: in the first quarter of 2025, the basic rent was €13.48/m² for existing properties and €16.58/m² for new builds. For a 100 m² apartment, this means monthly basic rents of between €1,350 and €1,660 – with a continuing shortage of small and family-friendly apartments. In addition, there is a growing proportion of furnished and temporary tenancies, which are largely exempt from rent controls.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for people on low or middle incomes in particular to remain in their familiar neighbourhoods. The risk of displacement is therefore growing – whether through luxury renovations, conversions to owner-occupied properties or rising operating costs. In Düsseldorf, it is estimated that around 7,000 households are at acute risk of displacement.

These developments show that the market alone will not solve the problem. We need a decisive public housing policy that creates affordable housing, stops speculative displacement and protects the social cohesion of our neighbourhoods. In hardly any other area does the municipal level have such far-reaching scope for action as in housing.

Housing policy is therefore one of the central areas of social justice in Düsseldorf. At Volt Düsseldorf, we are committed to an active, public welfare-oriented and climate-conscious housing policy. Our goal is to secure affordable housing, prevent displacement and promote socially and ecologically sustainable urban development.

Guiding Values and Vision

Protect against displacement and social sellout: Düsseldorf should remain a city for everyone – not just for those who can afford high rents. That is why we are consistently opposed to displacement and strengthen protection for people who live in their established neighbourhoods. For example, by introducing new social preservation statutes and strictly enforcing them, and by limiting the conversion of rental apartments into condominiums. For

us, socially just urban development means long-term housing security instead of short-term returns.

Strategically using municipal pre-emptive rights: The city needs room for manoeuvre to actively counteract the market with rules that are oriented towards the common good. With pre-emptive rights, Düsseldorf can specifically prevent housing from falling into speculative hands – and instead permanently orient it towards social purposes. We want to strengthen this instrument and use it strategically.

Consistently penalising speculative vacancy and misuse: Housing is for living in – not for investment or short-term profits. We are committed to clear rules and effective controls to prevent vacancy and misuse. Anyone who blocks or misuses housing must face consequences.

Conversion of office space into residential space: More than 1 million square metres of office space in our city is vacant. We call for a transformation register that systematically records vacant office properties and examines their conversion. Owners should be actively supported in the conversion process. The city must penalise long-term vacancy with vacancy taxes, because anyone who leaves existing space unused in a growing city is clearly acting against the common good.

Promoting serial construction and cost-efficient standards: Simple, good construction is possible – if standards are applied intelligently. Serial construction methods, modular concepts and smart planning can reduce costs and shorten construction times. This creates affordable living space that is of high quality and remains accessible to broad sections of the population.

Combining climate protection and socially acceptable building renovation: The energy transition in existing buildings must not be carried out at the expense of tenants. We focus on renovations that reduce emissions and conserve resources – while maintaining social balance. Sustainability and affordability do not have to be contradictory in housing construction.

Best Practice: Mittelholstein Building Cooperative

The Mittelholstein building cooperative provides an outstanding example of how affordable housing can be achieved in new buildings on a limited budget. There, consistent attention was paid to implementing only the minimum standards required by law.

In concrete terms, this meant that lifts were only installed in buildings with more than three floors, expensive underground car parks were dispensed with, insulation was kept to a reasonable level, and excessive sound insulation or passive house standards were avoided.

This strategy led to drastically lower construction costs – in some cases less than 2,000 euros per square metre. This made it possible to offer a net cold rent of around 5.10 euros/m². At the same time, there was no compromise on quality of living: instead of luxury, there are well-designed floor plans, solid materials and long-term rent control in the cooperative model.

This example shows that those who plan pragmatically, focus on people's actual needs and apply building regulations intelligently can create affordable housing even in times of skyrocketing construction costs and a shortage of skilled workers – without compromising on quality.

Mobile Düsseldorf

Equitable space distribution and smooth mobility for a livable city.

More than 655,000 Düsseldorf residents and over 300,000 commuters move through the city every day. Düsseldorf ranks as the third most congested city in Germany – and unfortunately, since early 2025, it is Germany's new traffic jam capital. The growing number of cars restricts quality of life – through space consumption, accidents, noise, and emissions.

Volt is committed to a modern, environmentally friendly transportation design that takes into account the needs of all citizens. By expanding public transport, bicycle infrastructure, and sharing services, we aim to make Düsseldorf a city where everyone enjoys getting around and living.

Guiding Values and Vision

Equal transportation design for a livable city center: By 2035, parked cars on public streets should be reduced by half. To achieve this, we rely on the expansion of Rheinbahn (public transport), bicycle infrastructure, and sharing services. The introduction of a **city toll** like in London (excluding electric vehicles, emergency, care, and delivery vehicles) and a recalculation of resident parking fees will secure the financing of these measures. A speed limit of 30 km/h will apply, except on multi-lane main roads. These are to be prepared for the future of autonomous driving.

Modern bicycle infrastructure: Through the rapid expansion of the bicycle network, express cycle paths to neighboring cities, intelligent traffic light systems, and bicycle parking spaces, the bicycle will become the most convenient, fastest, and safest alternative. Clean air, less noise, and an improved quality of stay will especially benefit the health of us Düsseldorfers. The goal is clear: safe cycling like in Utrecht.

Sustainable and modern transportation options through public transport and sharing: Mobility as part of public services must be consistently barrier-free, inclusive, and safe so that everyone can participate. Children and adolescents up to 16 years old should ride the Rheinbahn for free. Rheinbahn stops should be barrier-free and well-lit, P&R (park and ride) options should be expanded, and new residential projects should include a sufficient number of sharing cars and cargo bikes for residents, making the transition away from owning a car as attractive as possible.

Increasing the attractiveness of public transport: By specifically expanding services and optimizing timetables, reliability will be improved. To encourage more people to give up their private cars, the integration of transport modes will be strengthened through mobility hubs, and carsharing offers will be expanded across the city. An app will bundle all mobility options in the city and offer combinable tickets for easy use.

Economic Development

Sustainable economy:

locally rooted, European-minded, globally connected.

The Düsseldorf economy is booming, with a GDP of around €58.4 billion (2022) and a GDP per capita of approximately €93,598 (2022), which is significantly above the national average. The region is among the top locations for financial services, insurance, and fashion. Düsseldorf is globally connected and internationally attractive: around 40% (as of 2019) of the population has a migration background, including nearly 8,400 in “Little Tokyo.” But despite this strength, there are challenges: a shortage of skilled workers in care, IT, and trades; an unemployment rate of about 6.6% (November 2022); insufficient progress in digitalization; and relatively few new business startups.

This chapter outlines how Düsseldorf can build on its strengths, close existing gaps, and combine economic development with social and ecological responsibility. From start-up support and digital administration to skilled labor integration – we sketch out perspectives that will move Düsseldorf forward.

Guiding Values and Vision

An innovative and sustainable economy: The future is sustainable – whether in the private sector or in business. Düsseldorf has set ambitious goals to be climate-neutral by 2035. To achieve this, the city’s economy must also transform. We want to support companies, especially craft businesses and small to medium-sized enterprises, in transitioning towards sustainability and digitalization.

Attracting new companies from Asian countries: Düsseldorf, as an open and international city, is already Europe’s gateway to Japan and, to some extent, China. To strengthen this role and attract investment in the city’s available commercial spaces, we support targeted efforts to bring in new companies from Asia – with a particular focus on environmentally friendly technologies.

Start-ups in Düsseldorf: There is already a vibrant start-up community and established support structures in Düsseldorf. We want to expand this further, with a particular focus on spin-offs from local universities. Especially the financing of technology-based start-ups should be supported more strongly. This will ensure that Düsseldorf maintains an innovative and progressive economy. To foster a diverse start-up scene, we are also committed to supporting female-led and social start-ups.

Digital administration as a location factor: When forms, appointments, and permits are handled online, multilingual, and transparently, it saves time, reduces stress – and makes our city more attractive for talent and businesses. We want a digital Düsseldorf that connects instead of bureaucratizing.

Budget and Finance

Shaping the future instead of just managing it: Socially just and sustainable budgeting.

The city's budget reflects its political priorities. Every euro spent influences Düsseldorf's future. Even though the budget is tight, important investments in climate protection, education, and social cohesion must not be postponed. The starting point is challenging: despite high trade tax revenues, Düsseldorf is recording deficits in the hundreds of millions (2023: €274.4 million). At the same time, the city has assets of over €11.5 billion and an investment volume of around €700 million per year. What is needed is a long-term strategy for stable finances and sustainable investments.

We want a city that lives within its means without sacrificing important services for its people. Good financial policy is not just about numbers – it's about responsibility for the future.

Guiding Values and Vision

Long-term financial stability: Public services and future-oriented investments must be sustainably financed. To achieve this, we need a consistent and transparent budgeting strategy. We advocate for realistic planning that anticipates future costs (e.g. climate adaptation, digitalization, infrastructure maintenance) and ensures Düsseldorf remains capable of action even in times of crisis.

Smart investments for the common good: Instead of across-the-board cuts or isolated prestige projects, we want meaningful investments – for example in public transport, digital administration, and schools. These benefit all citizens, promote sustainability, and increase the city's attractiveness.

Rethinking revenue – for a fair revenue distribution: A stable community needs fair revenues. We are rethinking municipal financing, promoting public welfare-oriented participation and opening up new avenues for financing important future tasks.

Investments with vision: Investments must be effective and responsible. That is why we want to systematically evaluate them according to their social benefits – social, ecological and economic – and thus focus our investments specifically on the future.

Make better use of federal and EU funding: Many funding opportunities remain unused – not because of a lack of need, but because of structural issues. We want to plan strategically, apply for funding in a targeted manner and make more consistent use of the opportunities offered by these subsidies.

Introducing impact-oriented budget management: Public spending should not only be correct, but also meaningful. In future, the budget should systematically record what actually works – so that resources can be deployed where they make a noticeable difference.

Düsseldorf in the Heart of Europe

Only together are we unbeatable.

As the first pan-European party, represented in over 30 countries with the same basic programme, Europe is our core issue. European integration brought peace between once-hostile nations, economic growth and prosperity for all. Now, 80 years after the end of the Second World War, this confederation of states is being severely tested by the rise of nationalism everywhere.

We at Volt are convinced that we can only solve the challenges of our time by joining forces: as a strong, united Europe based on solidarity. That is why we want not less, but more Europe: a reformed, truly effective EU Parliament, a common foreign ministry and a European army. Because the threats of our time do not stop at national borders. Of course, we cannot reform the EU in Düsseldorf. But we can ensure that the trust that may have been lost in recent years is restored.

Guiding Values and Vision

European idea and integration: In many places, forces critical of the EU are gaining ground, and confidence in the European Union as a peace project is dwindling. We at Volt strongly oppose this and want to support everything that promotes the development of a European identity and a European narrative. For example, a common European culture of remembrance and the visibility of and advice on EU funding through a newly established funding office.

European networks: We are committed to intensifying existing town twinning partnerships and want to ensure that Düsseldorf enters into further town twinning partnerships in the long term in order to bring the diversity of Europe closer to citizens in an accessible way through long-term exchange programmes, trips and events.

EU expats: We want to create a contact point that focuses on the intensive expansion of Erasmus+ projects for young professionals in Düsseldorf and supports and accompanies interested expats and companies in their organisation. In this way, we want to counteract the shortage of skilled workers and strengthen European integration in our city. Through targeted social media campaigns, Erasmus+ programmes and more, we want to make our city attractive to interested European professionals and highlight the many other advantages it has to offer.

Responsible for content

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