

# **Wolke**

**Europe's best  
for North Rhine-  
Westphalia (NRW)**

**SHORT ELECTION PROGRAMME**

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It is time for a **New Politics**: a politics that puts people first and sees itself as a service provider; a politics that not only recognises the challenges of the 21st century but also solves them; a politics that thinks beyond national borders in order to solve the great challenges of our time by working together.

We have written down **our vision for NRW** in 4 chapters:

**EUROPEAN | DEMOCRATIC | ACTIVE**

**CLIMATE NEUTRAL | ENTREPRENEURIAL | DIGITAL**

**CITY | COUNTRY | CHANGE**

**SELF-DETERMINED | SOLIDARY | INCLUSIVE**

Digitisation needs added value - at schools, in administration, at work. We stand for a genuine energy transition that promotes and prioritises renewable energies. For us, politics is transparent and always people-oriented. We want to restore trust. This requires a fresh perspective on politics and a fully comprehensive lobby register.

For this we campaign at all levels: in the European and Dutch parliaments, in city councils all over Europe and in many city councils in NRW. **We are the first truly pan-European party!**

**It is time for the best of Europe in the NRW state parliament!**

## OUR LIGHTHOUSE TOPICS

### **Light|house** [Substantive]

A tower that lights the way for the helmsmen and women. Lighthouses provide orientation, warn of shoals and show where the journey is leading.

What do we need for this? A compass so that we do not forget the most important anchors: Justice, freedom, solidarity, human dignity and equal opportunities. Because that is how we will find the way to a New Politics for NRW together!

**Synonyms:** Compass, main focus



## MODERN SCHOOLS

Already before the Corona pandemic it was clear that there are severe deficits in the digitisation of schools in North Rhine-Westphalia. There is a lack of equipment, suitable infrastructure, training and further education, personnel and standards for digital solutions. In addition, teachers are often left alone when it comes to digital media, which means they lack valuable time for their core task: ensuring the education, upbringing and individual support of pupils.

➤ **The development of a teaching and learning culture with a higher proportion of digitisation** which offers added value in terms of the individualisation of teaching, so that the development of weak pupils and the demands of strong pupils can be achieved simultaneously and efficiently.

➤ **The reliable provision of pupils and teachers** with digital devices even after the current subsidies have expired. In future, all pupils from lower secondary level onwards should have a digital device. Regular maintenance, repair and new purchases are to be ensured by suitable IT specialists.

➤ **Prompt creation of the necessary technical infrastructure** for schools. This includes, for example, an appropriate number of electrical sockets in the classrooms, gigabit-capable cabling in the school buildings, connection to the internet via fibre optics and equipping the

premises with wireless LAN.

➤ **IT support**, for example user administration, maintenance of servers and active network components (e.g. switches, WLAN access points) as well as data security matters must be carried out by **qualified specialists** on site at larger schools. Schools without an IT administration of their own should be able to fall back on IT experts provided by the state government.

➤ **Teaching in the age of digitisation** offers the potential to take a big step towards the personalisation of learning opportunities. The differences in academic performance in learning groups make it impossible for teachers to respond to every child and young person in such a way that they are all fostered and challenged according to the full extent of their individual needs and capabilities. The use of digital teaching materials offers completely new possibilities, such as the simple provision of explanatory videos and tasks at different levels, also taking into account different special needs. Therefore, Volt advocates for the **amendment of quality criteria for teaching and learning materials** so that they become more interactive and descriptive.

➤ The “Primus School” in North Rhine-Westphalia is a type of school that already meets many of our demands with regard to individualised teaching. We therefore want to expand their number.

## RENEWABLE ENERGIES

We want to make NRW CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral by 2035 and climate-neutral by 2040. To achieve this, the production and use of energy must be considered in terms of its impact on the climate. Renewable energies (RE) are the basic prerequisite for effectively reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and combating climate change (e.g. for e-mobility, electric heat, etc.). Presently, NRW is still heavily dependent on coal and other fossil fuels: About two-thirds of the final energy consumption is obtained from fossil energy sources (as of 2018). Renewable energies are only used to a small extent in NRW: in 2019, their share of state-wide electricity consumption was only 16%, and the RE share of the consumption of all energy sources used domestically was even only around 5%. Due to the strict proximity regulations and the relatively dense settlement, the expansion of renewable energies is severely restricted. Lengthy administrative and legal proceedings are an impediment to the expansion of wind power in particular.

- We are calling for a **coal phase-out until 2030**.
- The **annual expansion quota for renewable energies** must be increased, specified and implemented.
- The **1000 metre distance regulation for wind energy plants** should be replaced

by an intelligent solution that is oriented towards the real impact on local residents.

- The **energy infrastructure** must also be adapted to the new energy mix.
- The **expansion of smart electricity and heat grids** must be further advanced.
- The power fluctuations arising from renewable sources must be addressed by **energy storage** in order to **ensure grid stability**.
- In energy use, preference must be given to the **most appropriate technologies** (in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and energy efficiency).
- Through power-to-fuel processes, **all fossil fuels still needed must be replaced by e-fuels by 2035**.
- A **citizens' portal on energy transition** in which information, status, goal, and potential of the energy transition in NRW are presented in a comprehensible way will ensure transparency regarding the implementation of the energy transition.

## NEW POLITICS

**Confidence in politics is declining. According to a survey (Statista: 2020), only 34 % of respondents have confidence in the federal government and only 16 % in political parties. In NRW, according to surveys, only 43 % of respondents trust the current state government.**

**Volt NRW sees a lack of transparency as one of the biggest problems in politics, increasing mistrust and frustration with politics. In order to obtain information, currently a request has to be submitted in a cumbersome way.**

➤ **Allowances, grants or donations** of € 25 or more for members of parliament as well as **additional income** of € 0 or more must be reported and disclosed.

➤ **As a rule, committee meetings** must be streamed **publicly**.

➤ The **Freedom of Information Law** must be reformed. We demand that the publication requirements for state agencies be expanded to include contracts for public services, appraisals, statistics, administrative regulations, public plans and geodata, and that they be made accessible to all people in a central and free information register.

➤ The **cooling-off period of former government members** must be raised to three years to **prevent corruption and disproportionate lobbying**.

➤ By **introducing a Lobby Register**, trust in democracy can be regained again and corruption made more difficult:

➤ A **Lobby Register** is to be introduced for contacts of members of the State Parliament, the State Government and the highest State authorities. This Register must be **publicly accessible** on the internet.

➤ In addition to details on advocacy, the register will also record an **executive and a legislative footprint** for each law to clearly show where influence was exerted and by whom.

➤ **Violations are to be made an offence** and provided with relevant sanctions as well as benefit confiscation. Serious violations must be made public.

➤ To ensure compliance, an **independent auditing body** must be established to check and report violations

## MINISTRY OF DIGITAL

### AFFAIRS

The digitisation efforts in Germany resemble a pieced-together patchwork. In order to establish a comprehensive strategy, higher-level coordination is necessary. We want to bundle local expertise and, with a digital ministry, create a clear, uniform and superordinate contact person in order to be able to act more effectively and, above all, more quickly.

➤ An **autonomous Ministry of Digital Affairs** of the state of NRW creates the framework for digitisation to be implemented easily, quickly and securely on all levels of public administration.

➤ In addition to coordination, the **new ministry's tasks** also include financing the projects and initiatives of the future digital initiative (strategy).

➤ **Procurement and supplier management** with regard to technical and digital materials are to be centralised.

➤ Existing initiatives and programmes such as Open:NRW, Digitalstrategie NRW or Digitale Wirtschaft NRW will be **managed centrally** in the ministry.

➤ The ministry actively supports the other ministries and municipalities in the **implementation of digitisation measures**. The Digital Ministry should also actively seek **cross-border cooperations** in order to participate in best practices from Germany and Europe or to develop them jointly.



## EUROPEAN

## DEMOCRATIC

## ACTIVE

### EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

#### FOR EUROPE

Volt NRW stands for a European pluralism that is already being practised at school.

- We want to give pupils the opportunity to go on at least one **EU-level school exchange** during their school career.
- We demand special **consideration of European topics** in the development of future **core curricula**.
- We advocate an expansion of **cross-border educational projects** at the state level **with schools from Belgium or the Netherlands**.

### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION FOR

#### EVERYONE

Volt NRW is committed to ensuring that the diversity of society is reflected in political institutions and organisations.

#### Political participation of people with disabilities

- We demand **barrier-free access to all public information**, particularly regarding the formation of political positions, the exercise of the right to vote, and running for elections.

- We call for **mandatory minimum standards** in establishing barrier-free access for all public bodies and authorities as well as for public service broadcasting.

#### Political participation of migrant people

- We demand the introduction of voting **rights for EU citizens** with main residence in NRW (3 years) in state elections and for **non-EU citizens** with permanent residence in local elections.

- We are committed to facilitating access to public **information** by making it available in **further languages**.

#### Political participation of young people

- We call for the **lowering of the voting age in state elections to 16 years and of the right to vote in local elections to 14 years**.

### RETHINKING SECURITY

Volt NRW stands for security authorities that can meet the challenges of our time.

- We demand a **restructuring of the currently 47 district police administrations**. This should result in a significantly smaller number of administrations with comparable size and performance as well as lean administrative structures.
- We stand for **modern digital resources** that are oriented towards the needs of the staff. We advocate an overall digital concept, ideally **involving all federal states** and the Schengen countries.

**Cooperation within the EU** should be expanded and joint projects with our European neighbours should be advanced.

- We advocate the strengthening of the **public order offices**. For this we demand centralised training, the formation of cooperative alliances and a police property protection service, so that the police can better manage their core duties.
- We support the increased use of specialists in complex investigations and an appropriate remuneration for them.
- We call for a **comprehensive survey** on racist, extremist and discriminatory attitudes in **all public offices**. We advocate for more transparency and the creation of an independent investigation authority in the event of any corresponding allegations.

## DISASTER PROTECTION

Against the background of the flood disaster on 14 July 2021, in which parts of North Rhine-Westphalia were flooded and people lost their lives, Volt NRW sees a massive need for action in disaster prevention and mitigation.

- We call for an **improved warning infrastructure**. To this end, warning sirens must be set up in all towns and cities. **Cell broadcasting**, which is already used in many countries, is to be introduced nationwide.

➤ We stand for a fusion of civil protection and disaster management on a national level.

➤ We see all responsibility for civil protection not in the Ministry of the Interior, but in a **separate state office**.

➤ We demand that **European cooperation be strengthened**, with NRW providing **further capacities for the European Civil Protection Pool and participating in rescEU**.

## CLIMATE NEUTRAL

## ENTREPRENEURIAL

## DIGITAL

### MUNICIPALITY, STATE

### AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Volt NRW stands for a reform of the currently **rather arbitrary structure of the federal states** as well as for a systematic **removal of duplicate structures** on the administrative levels in NRW.

➤ We call for preparations of a **fundamental reform of the current federal system**.

The reform should allow a clear separation between federal and state tasks. A corresponding reform commission should also examine the advantages and disadvantages of a significantly reduced number of federal states.

➤ We want to divide the **administrative districts east of the Rhine into only two administrative districts**. While one administrative district is to contain the entire Ruhr district, the administration of the remaining, more rural regions of the previous administrative districts of Arnsberg, Detmold, Münster is to be assigned to the second administrative district.

➤ We advocate a central office for the analysis, comparison and evaluation of processes in the state ministries and authorities. The goal must be to trigger a continuous **improvement in administrative processes** in NRW.

## FINANCING OF CITIES AND

## MUNICIPALITIES

Volt NRW stands for a reliable **financing of the municipalities in NRW** in order to ensure the continuous provision of public services by the municipalities.

➤ Together with other federal states, we advocate the consideration of a nationwide **abolition of the trade tax**. The elimination can be compensated by increasing the municipalities' share of income, sales or corporate income tax.

➤ We demand that the federal government and the federal states assume the **full costs for the social benefits regarding housing and heating for people seeking employment**.

➤ We urge NRW to participate more strongly than in the past in joint tasks and to make its subsidies and financial assistance **to the municipalities plannable in the long term**.

### DIGITAL NETWORK EXPANSION

Volt NRW advocates a digital infrastructure expansion along the road and rail traffic routes as well as in rural areas.

➤ We demand that the coordination and supervision of the **glass fibre expansion** be carried out by the Gigabit offices of the state of NRW in close cooperation with the Federal Network Agency as well as the municipal institutions.

➤ We want to achieve full coverage of NRW with **fast fibre-optic connections** with at least one gigabit per second in download and upload by 2027 at the latest.

➤ We want to implement **complete coverage with 5G** in NRW by 2025.

## STRUCTURAL CHANGE USING THE EXAMPLE OF THE RUHR REGIO

Volt NRW supports a successful and sustainable structural change in many regions of NRW, exemplified in the following by the Ruhr region.

### Political and administrative reform

➤ We advocate a **municipal reorganisation of the 15 municipalities of the Ruhr region into one independent city-municipality.**

➤ We want to create a district exclusively for the Ruhr region as part of a **reorganisation of the administrative districts in NRW.**

### Economic innovation and support

➤ We want to further support the growing IT sector and the **specialised expertise** that has been gained there.

➤ We will support and help to interconnect the growing mechanical engineering industry in its efforts to **digitalise and tap into new markets.**

➤ We want to actively involve the thriving logistics industry in all regional and supra-regional transport projects and further develop the **Ruhr region as a hub for goods and industrial products.**

➤ We will continue to promote tourism as a means of advertising the Ruhr region as a **place to live and to invest.**

### Reducing long-term unemployment

➤ We are committed to expanding **re-training opportunities for employees from sectors that are in long-term contraction**, so that they can find a new role in future-oriented industries.

CITY

COUNTRY

CHANGE

## THE FUTURE OF RURAL AREAS

Against the background of the current challenges, Volt NRW stands for a strengthening of rural areas.

- We support active efforts to promote town, city, and regional centres in order to **stop further proliferation of urban sprawl**.
- Before designating new residential areas, we see the need to give greater consideration to **unoccupied and idle sites** as well as areas in medium-sized centres with a history of contamination.

### Day care centres and schools in rural areas

- We advocate more flexible forms of care in **small villages lacking a childcare centre** of their own. Qualified „village mothers and fathers“ should be allowed to take over childcare as a team.
- We demand a **review and adjustment of the requirements for daycare mothers and fathers** with the aim of reducing bureaucracy while at the same time ensuring professional standards.

## INFRASTRUCTURE IN RURAL AREAS

- We support the targeted development of **distribution structures, such as mobile village shops**. These should ensure the supply of everyday products at one's own doorstep.
- We want to promote the expansion of **charging infrastructure for battery-powered electric vehicles** in both public and private spaces to make e-mobility more accessible in rural areas.

### Rural economy

- We advocate the **establishment of regional innovation hubs** to connect university research with the rural areas.
- We stand for regional companies to be able to apply for public contracts as easily as possible - e.g. by **reducing bureaucratic hurdles**.

## INDIVIDUAL MOBILITY

Volt NRW wants to create the possibilities for individual mobility so that people do not have to rely on their own car.

- We demand that the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia advocates the introduction of a **regular speed limit of 30 km/h within towns and cities**.
- We want to see a greater expansion of **rail-based public transport and its further electrification**. Old routes should - where possible and necessary - be reacti-

vated and the existing routes expanded.

- We will accelerate the **expansion of the barrier-free accessibility of public transport**.
- We are in favour of expanding the possibilities for **transporting bicycles in public transport**.
- We want to make it easier to **change the use of individual lanes** on multi-lane roads to bus or eco-lanes.

### Road construction financing

- We call for the abolition of the **municipal charges** so that residents no longer have to pay road construction fees. This kind of financing is unjust and threatens livelihoods.

## QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY

Volt NRW wants to enable quality living in the city and for this reason sees the need to set the course for an effective transformation now.

- We strive for the **redensification and the multiple or mixed use** of sealed areas in order to increase their efficiency.
- Following a best practice approach from the Netherlands, we want to introduce subsidy programmes for the energetic refurbishment of buildings with an annual **renovation rate of at least 4 % in existing buildings**.

- We want to set up **comprehensive programmes to replace heating systems**, which will increase the share of heat pumps to 60% of all heating systems by 2035.
- We want to make **sustainable use of newly built roof surfaces** mandatory from the first square metre for private, but especially for commercial and public buildings.
- We stand for **measures to improve air quality**, such as switching to zero-emission transport and expanding green spaces as well as the filtering of pollutants from the air.
- We advocate limiting the time in which buildings are illuminated and reducing illuminated advertising displays in public spaces in order to reduce light pollution.
- We promote the „city of short distances“, as this not only reduces traffic volume and CO2 emissions, but also leads to passengers reaching their destinations more quickly.

## SELF-DETERMINED

## SOLIDARY

## INCLUSIVE

### HEALTHCARE

Volt NRW wants to achieve comprehensive patient care by (specialist) physicians, health care providers and nurses. This is needed in order to contribute to the health of society as a whole and to relieve the strain on our healthcare system.

- We want to **increase investments in hospitals**.
- We advocate for the nationwide establishment of so-called **24-hour emergency clinics in rural areas**.
- We want to strengthen **family doctor-centred care** in NRW. In doing so, we aim to make general practice more attractive and to strengthen medical care in rural areas.
- We support the **state chamber of nursing professions** that is already being established. The chamber will give nurses the opportunity to self-manage, to promote the quality of their profession and to participate politically.
- We want to **make the emergency services in NRW fit for the future**. To this end, we are planning, among other things, a standardisation of the emergency ser-

vice infrastructure and the same state-wide treatment guidelines for emergency paramedics

### STRONG FAMILIES

Volt NRW stands for extensive participation in social life for children and young people, regardless of their family model, origin, or the economic situation of their parents.

- We are committed to ensuring that **different and diverse family models are given equal legal and social status**.
- We advocate a strict review of school regulations and school materials in order to eliminate from them any form of discrimination.
- We demand the rigorous implementation of the UN Convention on Children's Rights.
- We strive to ensure that in order to **protect against sexualised violence**, the quality standards of all prevention services are regularly checked and expanded.
- We demand that **social work be sustainably anchored and financially backed** in all educational institutions.
- We support the participation of children and young people from financially disadvantaged families in **clubs (especially sports and music clubs)**. Furthermore, the free use of public transport should be made possible **for all pupils**.

- We want to further expand **youth, mother and parent centres as well as multi-generation houses**.

### STUDYING IN EUROPE

Volt NRW wants to promote the expansion and creation of new cross-border cooperation with universities in the area bordering the Netherlands and Belgium.

- We want to create the **framework conditions for the creation of a Euregio University Network** with our neighbouring countries The Netherlands and Belgium. The Euregio University Network should enable studying, teaching and research „without borders“ and become a driver of innovation through **cooperation with companies**.
- We aim to extend the NRW Semester Ticket far into the Netherlands and Belgium to stimulate European exchange while enabling students to travel sustainably.
- We would like students to be able to complete at least 10 % of their examinations (ECTS credits), **ideally 20 % of the ECTS, completely freely at a university belonging to the Euregio university network**. An **alignment of the semester duration**, as has already been implemented, for example, at the University of Mannheim, should prevent time gaps in cross-border studies.

- We call for the establishment of a **common digital learning platform for the universities belonging to the university network**.

### NRW AND THE CHURCH

Against the backdrop of the abuse scandals that have repeatedly emerged, Volt NRW stands for a fundamental reassessment of the relationship between the state of NRW and the church.

- We want to enforce that, in case of a **suspected criminal offence**, such as crimes against sexual self-determination, the public prosecutor's office investigates in all cases.
- We advocate that **church-run institutions (kindergartens, day-care centres, hospitals, nursing homes and care services) should no longer be subject to church law alone**, but also to general national law. In addition to fundamental rights, this includes employee rights and contractual remuneration.
- We stand for the obligation of **church institutions to be transparent** with regard to hiring, dismissals, admission of people under their care and working condition.



Have we made you so curious that you want to join us? Then we cordially invite you to get a better idea of who we are. There are three ways to do this: as a volunteer, member or supporting member. Of course, we are also happy to receive your **donation**.

## **VOLUNTEER**

Would you like to get involved as and when you feel like it and not enter into any binding commitments? Then you can implement your ideas as a volunteer in your local team and participate in events and activities - Europe-wide, of course.

## **MEMBER**

You want to get started right away and are sure that you want to help shape politics throughout Europe at Volt? As a member, you have all the rights to vote on contents, candidates and board members, or to stand for election yourself. You can work in all teams - from the local to the European level - and support our organisation with your membership fee.

## **SUPPORTING MEMBER**

You have got plenty to do, but you think we're great? Then become a supporting member and make a significant contribution to the sustainability and progress of our project. For as little as €10 per month, you can help build our vision and organisation.

# **Volt**

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## EPILOGUE

You've done it! You now have an overview of what Volt NRW stands for and what we want to change in the state parliament.

You can find more information about our work in your region or city [here](#).

**Volt**

[www.voltnrw.org](http://www.voltnrw.org)