

Volt Europa Co-President candidacy - Marina Rrika

Coming from the experience of building Volt in Albania, I have seen firsthand what it means to create political engagement in environments where trust in institutions is fragile and many citizens, especially young people feel disconnected from politics.

This experience has shaped my understanding that the central challenge for European democracy today is not a lack of ideas, but a lack of connection between political structures and the people they are meant to serve.

As such, I am happy to announce that I am running for Co-President of Volt Europa. Because I believe that Volt, as a political force that aims to make a real difference, must further strengthen its ability not only to define democratic values, but to translate them into concrete practices that transform realities and reshape politics in favor of European citizens. Volt has the potential to become a truly transformative pan-European political force.

When I am elected as Co-President of Volt Europa, I will work towards this goal, not only as a political representative, but as someone shaped by lived experience. I come from a small country and a small city, where opportunities are not equally given, but often have to be fought for. As a young student, I walked long distances to access education because basic public services, such as transportation, were not provided in smaller communities. I grew up in a context where being a woman often means navigating prejudice and limitation, where the desire to create change is too often dismissed as naive, and where systems tend to favor privilege over merit. These experiences did not discourage me, but they defined me. They are the reason I chose to challenge the very system that produced them, to become a voice for young people and for those who continue to face the consequences of inequality and systemic failure. I chose to contribute to building a society where equal opportunities are not an aspiration, but a reality.

With a background in Political Science and European Studies, and through my work both in Albania and internationally with youth and human rights organizations, I have remained guided by a clear purpose: **to contribute to the development of a fair, inclusive, and truly democratic society.**

My Priorities for Volt Europa

1. Reconnecting citizens with European politics by rebuilding trust in democratic systems and creating meaningful opportunities for participation, especially for young people. Strengthening the connection between citizens and politics is essential to rebuild trust in democracy. This means creating more accessible, transparent, and participatory ways for people, especially young people, to engage and feel represented. This can be achieved by launching regular, structured citizen engagement formats across chapters (such as local forums or digital consultations) to ensure citizens can directly contribute to discussions and policy-shaping processes.

2. Building a stronger, truly pan-European Volt by supporting the growth, coordination, and long-term sustainability of all chapters across Europe. For Volt to succeed as a European movement, it must grow in a balanced and coordinated way across all countries. This requires stronger support, better collaboration, and equal opportunities for all chapters to develop. Creating a stronger internal support system for smaller and emerging chapters, including mentorship, resource-sharing, and cross-country collaboration to ensure sustainable growth everywhere, is my plan on how to make it happen.

3. Turning inclusion into action by ensuring that diversity, equal opportunities must be effectively reflected in how Volt operates and leads, especially when these values are challenged. As a Co President I will make sure to introduce structured mechanisms, promoting representation and equal opportunities, such as leadership development programs for underrepresented groups and clear internal standards for inclusivity.

4. Expanding Volt outward as a professional political force. To increase its impact, Volt must continue to grow not only internally but also strengthen its external presence as a credible, professional, and visible political actor across Europe. As a Co President I will focus on developing a more coordinated external strategy across countries, including stronger communication, clearer positioning on key issues, and building partnerships with relevant organizations and stakeholders to increase visibility and political influence.

1. Reconnecting Citizens with European Politics

Across Europe, there is a growing lack of trust in democratic systems, particularly among young people who feel disconnected from decision-making processes and do not see the impact of their participation reflected in reality. This is not a lack of interest, it is a lack of trust and representation.

As Co-President of Volt Europa, I will focus on:

- Creating concrete and accessible formats for citizen participation within Volt, beyond traditional structures
- Strengthening the role of young people in decision-making, not only in campaigns but in shaping priorities
- Improving communication to make European politics more understandable, relatable, and transparent
- Supporting local initiatives that bring politics closer to communities and everyday realities

By strengthening the connection between citizens and politics, Volt can play a key role in rebuilding trust in democratic systems. A movement that listens, engages, and responds to people's realities is better positioned to create lasting impact and ensure that democracy is not only representative, but truly participatory. For example:

- A young person joining a local Volt meeting and being able to directly share concerns that are later reflected in a policy discussion
- A digital platform where members across Europe vote or give input on key decisions or priorities
- Local Volt teams organizing open discussions in small cities, not only capitals and where citizens can speak directly with representatives
- Clear and accessible communication explaining how decisions are taken inside Volt

2. Building a Stronger, Truly Pan-European Volt

Volt's unique strength lies within its pan-European identity which is exactly why it must be reflected across all chapters. While some chapters are well-established, others are still in the process of building a strong foundation. For Volt to become a truly European political force, it must grow in a more balanced, coordinated, and sustainable way. While building Volt Albania, I have understood both the challenges and the potential of growing a political movement from the ground up. My goal is to ensure that every chapter is empowered to grow and contribute equally to our shared European vision, because democracy must be present in every corner, this only can be achieved by:

- Strengthening support systems for smaller and emerging chapters, including mentorship, training, and resource-sharing
- Improving coordination and collaboration between national teams to ensure knowledge and best practices are effectively exchanged
- Increasing visibility and representation of underrepresented regions, particularly in Eastern and Southeastern Europe
- Building more sustainable internal structures that allow Volt to scale its impact across countries

A more cohesive and balanced Volt will not only strengthen its internal structure but also increase its credibility as a European political force. By ensuring that growth and opportunity are shared across all chapters, Volt can better reflect its ambition of representing citizens across the entire continent. There are some ways for implementing this:

- A smaller chapter receiving direct support and mentorship from a more established one to run its first successful campaign
- Teams from different countries working together on a shared European campaign instead of acting separately
- Members from less represented regions being visible in European events, panels, and decision-making spaces
- Easy access for all chapters to shared resources, tools, and campaign materials

3. Turning Inclusion into Action

Inclusion is one of Volt's core values, but to remain credible, it must be consistently reflected in how we operate, lead, and make decisions. At a time when Europe and the world are increasingly facing political movements that challenge fundamental

human rights and seek to roll back progress on equality, it is more important than ever to remain firm and intentional in defending these values. I'm looking to focus on the following points.:

- Promoting greater representation of women in leadership positions and decision-making processes
- Creating more structured opportunities for minorities and underrepresented groups to actively participate within Volt
- Encouraging internal practices that ensure fairness, transparency, and equal access to opportunities
- Supporting initiatives that empower individuals who are often excluded from political spaces

Embedding inclusion into Volt's structures and culture strengthens both its integrity and its political relevance. At a time when these values are increasingly challenged, remaining consistent and intentional in promoting equality and representation is essential to maintaining trust and leading by example. In practice, this could look like:

- More women and underrepresented voices visibly leading meetings, campaigns, and decision-making processes
- A new member from a minority background feeling supported and encouraged to take on leadership roles
- Internal processes where opportunities are clearly shared and accessible to everyone
- Events and discussions where diverse perspectives are actively included and valued

4. Expanding Volt outward as a professional political force

Letting opportunities go to waste is not how we build a strong political force. From my own experience, a lot of time is spent on internal problems that could be better spent on outreach, chapter support and political alliances. The Co-Presidents are in a unique situation within Volt, where they can spend a full-time job on building our political force. As Co-President I want to spend this time effectively, building our movement outward, while rationalising internal structures.

- Media outreach should be at the center of a Co-Presidents task, making sure our movement is visible across Europe
- Building alliances with other parties and people
- Streamlining and rationalising the internal processes with our team of general secretaries and members

A professional political party isn't built in a 3-year term and it will require significant effort. But if we focus our efforts into building systems that transcend a single board or team, we can make sure long term success becomes a standard at Volt. People come and go, but the political force that is Volt should remain to keep changing the lives of Europeans everywhere for many decades. Practically I think it's important to start at some of the points below.

- Focussing on creating a network with journalists and regularly providing them with content about what we are currently doing and our success across Europe
- Building alliances with other small parties that share our values and even looking at helping chapters integrating with them in strategically important countries.
- Volt representatives being regularly present in national media debates across different countries
- Collaboration with NGOs, youth groups, and civil society on shared campaigns

In a time of growing political uncertainty, what matters most is our ability to stay consistent in our values while remaining practical in how we act. I am committed to contributing to a Volt that continues to strengthen its impact, expand its presence across Europe, and turn its principles into real change for citizens. **A Europe that listens, includes, and acts is** not only a vision we should defend, it is a responsibility we must actively build every day.