

# Electoral Programme Pitch for Non-Executive Board Member Position

By Carlo Federico De Simon

## Who I am

My name is Carlo Federico De Simon. I'm 26 years old and Italian, but I grew up in Germany my whole life - Upper Franconia, to be exact. I then studied physics at the Technische Universität München until I decided to stop for mental health reasons.

I joined Volt less than a year ago. The reasons should be familiar to many of you: The global rise of right-wing populist nationalism, dissatisfaction with political institutions, and the desire for something new, something individuals can actively help build and that shares goals that seem so obvious to us all.

## How I got here

After joining Volt, I started getting involved with our international community. Specifically, I got to know the members and nonmembers on our official Discord server. There I was able to get a feeling for how diverse our community is, what attracts people to our cause, and what aspects differ between volters, and which ones unify us.

After becoming more comfortable in the more casual setting of such an online community, I joined the German Integrity Team. My hope was to evaluate and address wherever cases of misalignment of our values occurred. I noticed that many of the arising conflicts are often caused by inadequate communication. In that regard, the German Integrity team was acting as an important mediator of disputes.

There are also cases where conflict arises from fundamental ideological or value mismatch. This ambiguity about Volt's values and ideology goes beyond harmless internet conversations: the disagreements it creates hinder both our ability to do real political work and our development and cause. Instances of that conflict were part of what pushed me to apply for the board.

## Why I'm candidating

I'm candidating because multiple people told me they think I would be a good board member. I am not special in any particular way; I do not bring a ton of prior knowledge or particular expertise. My strong points are honesty, general curiosity I have for anything relevant to decisions that have to be made, and being a quick learner. I don't exude an aura of authority and have a general dislike for it in general. I presume this

stems from my anarchistic core, which is moderated by a thick layer of democratic principles.

I would consider myself an integrity- and value-oriented, grassroots candidate. My stepping up to the board is not motivated by a desire to climb a “career ladder” or to represent positions and influence for a certain splinter or subgroup. Rather, what drives me is concern for the philosophical and fundamental attributes we want to develop and live by at Volt.

As someone who's interested in topics like physics, philosophy, psychology, and more, the desire to understand things from basic principles is in my nature. That nature leads me to care a lot about rigorous reasoning as well as a thorough understanding of the human and emotional aspects of essentially everything. I consider these attributes to be foundational for anyone who is making important decisions that will impact a lot of people.

I am clear and direct when it comes to communication, as well as introspective and unashamed when it comes to my own shortcomings and faults, and I hope the tone and content of this text convey this properly. This open, honest, and also vulnerable conduct is not just a personal choice; it's also a key aspect of what builds trust. I hope it also helps with opening up communication channels for civil and public communication and debate. I am a person who is willing to elaborate and explain my thoughts and feelings in painstaking detail but who's also willing and unafraid to change my position if I learn about new information.

I want to encourage dialogue within Volt. Not just because I would personally benefit from the enjoyment of (internal) public debates and listening to other people's well-formulated ideas and world views, but because without it we cannot evaluate where we are or where to move to. We have to create a way for volters to express their opinions, individual wills, and stances in an easy and casual way.

The will of the voter base together with my own convictions - which I will display and elaborate on whenever asked - is going to be the fundament on which I will make decisions as part of the board.

## What I'll be working towards:

### Improve Feedback from base to Leadership positions

- Create regular surveys for volters to collect data
- Publicize these results so the members and especially the board knows the will of the base
- Being a non-legally binding vote allows for flexibility and sortation
- Questionnaires not just about concrete decisions but also about theoretical questions

### Work towards an internal Swiss-style model of direct democracy

- Decisions made by the board get publicized and are not implemented for a certain amount of time

- During this time volters can collect some amount of signatures if they want to oppose the decision made by the voted representatives
- If enough people from the voter base oppose the board decision, the item gets put on a list of things for a direct democratic vote
- The legally acceptable tools for this implementation are still in the works, but the previous point can start an internal culture of engaged and direct democracy using the non-legally binding surveys.

### **Enforce and define structural federal borders of responsibility**

- Propose a “only up” approach for each level of volt
- Give the local teams a clearly defined area of responsibility and protection of overreach from levels above
- Allows the lead positions focus on problems and work on their level and above
- Strengthens the grassroots aspect of volt in a structural and concrete way

### **Define Volts philosophical underpinning and identity**

- Collect data from aforementioned surveys
- Distill and explore the philosophical positions, values, and views separated from our concrete policies
- Collect them and formulate a paper - or manifesto - in which a rigorous and well-defined worldview is build
- Define our key “buzzwords” (Pan-European, Progressive, Pragmatic, Science and Evidence-based, etc.) into concrete concepts for our volters to explain and argue for our policies and positions from

### **Focus on Volt as a political movement, rather than a party or institution**

- Keep the grassroots alive
- Merging of professionalism in the structure with the natural and spontaneous existence of political movements
- Keep emerging hierarchies to the minimum and vertical mobility as open as possible
- Focus on the internal rather than the external with a self-critical attitude
- Make the vision Volt embraces bigger than Volt itself