

Leadership. Legitimacy. Leverage.

Europe is at a crossroads: from Putin's war of attrition against Ukraine to risking losing Greenland and facing the fallout of the war in Iran: the challenges have never been greater. Yet, the European Union remains weak and invisible. Our heads of state are paralyzed - by their protectionism and fear of losing power. Just like "America first", it's "Germany first", "France first", "Italy first" as no leader is considering Europe as a solution. If they only knew the political relevance a United Europe could have. A Europe that echoed the same message in all member states, a Europe that gave its citizens security and a home, a Europe capable of defending itself. A Europe that would stand up for democracy and stand as equal among geopolitical blocks.

Never has this Europe been so necessary and yet, never has it felt more out of reach.

Volt is also at a crossroads: If this is Europe's moment, shouldn't it be Volt's moment? On a paralyzed continent, Volt Europa could be the driving force to not only lead the narrative of a European Union rising to the challenge, but also leading the way, giving electors confidence that a vote for Volt in every country is the one and only vote for Europe. To get there, we will need a dose of practicing what we preach: If we want a powerful Europe that speaks for all member states, we need a powerful Volt Europa to show heads of state how it can work. If we want to involve citizens in European politics, Volt Europa needs to provide the projects and stories for chapters and citizens to start trusting us. If we want to make the step from niche to mainstream, we need to make citizens feel European.

This will also require a leap from us: we're just scratching the surface if we only use Volt Europa for administration. It's time to become political.

We need real European leadership

"That I'm still here." was my answer to a questionnaire back in 2018 of what I would be most proud of if I still was a member in five years. Good things take time. Politics is hard. Volt is even harder. It is the political equivalent of landing on the Moon. Over the years, I've built the team in Lille, I served four years on the Board of Volt France, including two as co-president. I ran in local elections, twice in European elections, in 2024 as lead candidate in France and I also ran to be your Spitzenkandidat. I've since moved to Slovenia – after Germany, Austria and France, the fourth EU member state I call my home and the second where I'm helping to build up Volt.

Volt has become something I consider important enough to leave my regular job. The time is now. Europe so desperately needs someone to state the equivalent of "Europe first" to counter nationalism and to inspire national governments to think beyond their borders. Europe desperately needs European leadership. Europe desperately needs Volt Europa.

I have decided that I will run to be your co-president, because I want Volt to lead the European political discourse and become the platform for European leadership. This means adjusting our approach: if everyone parrots a stronger Europe, we can only distinguish ourselves by delivering it. **If everyone agrees "what" we need, Volt needs to show "how" it can be done.** We have to transition from making claims to shaping Europe as a movement. We need to build the political relevance on a European level that our chapters alone cannot build.

Nobody is leading Europe and challenging the status quo. This is our opening: Volt Europa needs to lead.

This will be my mission as your co-president.

Shaping Europe (instead of just fixing the EU)

I always say that an election is only a reminder to vote for you. The convincing has to be done before. We have three years left until 2029 to do that. My co-presidency will be aimed to build trust and confidence in the population that Volt Europa is the solution for Europe, and to build trust and confidence among our members that we are able to rise up to the challenge.

Creating legitimacy - the conditions for electoral success

As your co-president, I will strive to:

#1 Make our organization a blueprint of the EU we envision. Not an EUtopia, but the next iteration of today's EU. If we can show to national governments that Volt Europa speaks with one voice and that we can make swift and democratic decisions with 33+ countries, we can build leverage by demanding why they are not doing it. If we want to lead Europe, we need to practice what we preach. Our organisation can be a tool to achieve this.

#2 Become an incubator for feeling European. The Commission is a legislator and bad at marketing. They make laws. I want Volt to make the emotions. By seeking funds for projects with artists that make us feel more European. Influencing public opinion is a long term goal but one we should learn. Our European culture needs to be defended, but culture is not defense or tech and becoming an incubator for cultural projects will also be an attempt to make Volt appealing for new types of members and bring us closer to gender parity.

#3 Give our MEPs legal initiative by mass-filing European Citizen Initiatives (ECI). We had 1.5 million votes in 2024. I want us to collect 1 million supporters and file as many ECIs from our Moonshot programme as we can. Clogging the Commission's legislative agenda means less space for Trump&friends and leverage to demand the Commission and Council to act. You saw the visibility the 'My Voice, My Choice: For Safe And Accessible Abortion' initiative received. If we manage at least one ECI per MEP, the visibility we get will drive us well over 1M supporters and help build the base for overcoming electoral thresholds in 2029 in all countries.

Building leverage - having impact in elections and influence

If we succeed in creating legitimacy – by Volt being a prototype for the EU we need, by having several million supporters signing our ECIs and by growing European sentiment –, we will obtain leverage and influence beyond elections. Volt started crazy ambitious and a bit naive. We aimed for the stars and landed on the moon with Damian getting elected. We need to get back to these roots, because we are halfway to the moon and we need to continue aiming for the stars to get there. A group in the European Parliament means little to voters. This is our “moon”. The Commission is our “stars”. We may only be able to practice this in 2029 to achieve it in 2034, but history has shown that breakthroughs are also possible when the conditions are met and stars align. I want to:

#4 Influence the choice of Commissioners in small EU member states. What if we identified our ideal Commissioners in all EU member states and Volt Europa had the budget to swing public opinion toward this person? Difficult in Germany, but maybe in Luxembourg, Malta or Cyprus. It requires an excellent network, fundraising, smart marketing and both Volt Europa and our local chapter need to be credible enough for a personality to work with us. Should the government pick a Commissioner over the people's will, our chapter will have a perfect setup in the next election cycle to vote them out and Volt in.

#5 Make the European elections an election for the Commission President. As a platform for European leadership, I'd like us to recruit European leaders (elected or not) - including known personalities willing to run for the Commission Presidency. Elected officials joining will allow us to build a sustainable Europarty. Ahead of the EP2029 campaign, Volt will organize a paneuropean Primary (think Eurovision for the Commission presidency). The Primary will make it clear we require 25 MEPs to challenge for the Commission and if you live in Spain and like our German lead candidate, a vote for Volt Spain to get an MEP will matter. Our Primary candidates lead our respective national lists and, ideally, they all make it into Parliament. Right after, we hold a public and transparent vote to let citizens pick our Spitzenkandidat from among them. Why? A candidate backed by the population coming out of the Parliament is hard to ignore for the EU Council and choosing someone else will provide our chapters the arguments to enter national Parliaments with substantial seats.

Crazy ambitious? Yes. Possible? Yes. We are 40.000. Everyone has 25 friends. We can get 1 million supporters to start filing ECIs and build our voter base. Once we manage this, we can begin to build leverage. By doing so, **we are no longer talking only about "what" we want, we are showing "how" we can shape and lead Europe** as a movement. To achieve this, we need to break with another habit: **we need to do it from the bottom up. Together.**

Bringing Volt Europa closer to its members

I often hear that "Europe is too far from citizens". Volt Europa sometimes seems equally far from members and I want to start to change this during my campaign. How?

Volt helped adopt transnational lists in 2022 in the European Parliament. They are still stuck in the EU Council because our national governments are impeding any progress towards a more democratic Europe. As a result, we don't know how hard it would be for a candidate from Finland leading a transnational list to convince voters in Portugal. Let's try and do a genuine transnational campaign for the first time in our history. To convince you to support me but also to get visibility with Volt Europa for the idea and for your chapter. My campaign will focus on three elements:

#1 A transnational listening and debating tour. I will visit major city teams in countries we're politically active in. You think campaigning in one country is hard. Let's try in as many countries as possible in a limited time frame. My goal is to meet as many members as possible to talk about my proposals and priorities and understand what you expect from our future European leadership and Board. I want to try and make your news during my stops and also help to build your network through events we organize around European leadership. You can follow my tour on [my campaign website](#), social media and by subscribing to [my campaign newsletter](#). I'd be super happy to meet as many of you as possible on my campaign trail. We can only shape Europe together. Let's connect and discuss how.

#2 A political declaration for European leadership. I want our June General Assembly in Bratislava to conclude with a political declaration of Volt Europa, to be debated and adopted by members. Like COP, even like the Love Parade, if we want Volt Europa to become politically relevant, we need to start making political declarations. Mine will demand treaty change and announce that Volt will become the platform for European leadership. If we want to shape Europe, we need to get noticed and we need to make bold statements. You can already [endorse the motion here](#).

#3 Convincing news outlets to focus solely on Europe on May 9th (Stretch goal). I've spent too many May 9th on events where I knew everyone. Staying in our bubble means not reaching the wider population and not making a difference. If we want to put the spotlight on Europe, we need to think larger. How can we reach all citizens in Europe? Make May 9th a public holiday for example. But that's not possible. Yet. 2nd on my list is putting "Europe first" in all major news on May 9th. That's possible and since I will be visiting all member states, I want to also pitch to news outlets to report only about what's happening in Europe - at least for one day. I am curious how many outlets like the idea and how many journalists I can add to my network.

The next couple of months will be a rough ride and I expect the next three years to be just as rough. I'm not running to maintain the status quo. I'm running to push the boundaries together with our organization, our functional teams and you towards the Europe that we need. I already talked about the "what" and the "how". I've learned that it is just as important to have a "why" and a "who".

We all know "why"? The time is now. Or never.

The Who? This is for you to decide on our Bratislava General Assembly on June 13 and 14.