
Non-Executive board candidacy - Nathan Liefing

Overview

As a non-executive board member, I see a clear task ahead for myself as Volt is in dire need of structure and professionalism. War on our continent, global turmoil and a weak fractured EU on the sidelines. Europe is at a crossroads and Volt should be the force shaping its future. Currently, we are not at the forefront of this new era, but we can be.

For this, Volt needs professionalism now more than ever. We cannot afford to get bogged down in internal ideological debates about topics that do not translate into real impact on the lives of all citizens of Europe (to avoid repetition). We need to connect with Europeans from all backgrounds through clear, widely supported policies and bring them on board with our EU reforms. That means Volt has to grow from an activist-like movement into a full-blown political organisation that produces professional politicians for a new era.

Our movement needs to progress, away from internal turmoil and towards a strong movement with support from East to West and North to South of the European continent. The European board has the task to make that happen and bring together all chapters from the grassroots up into our federal structure. One of my key points in making this happen is to strengthen the country council in the next 3(+) years.

Personal profile:

With me, you do not get a bachelor degree in political science or any bachelor or master for that matter. I proudly hold a trade-level IT degree that I've used to work my way up for the last 10+ years in the IT field. I'd classify myself as a practical minded, working-class European citizen.

Getting to know me, you will find I hold nature in high regard. A vegetarian, driving electric, trying to impact the world positively where I can. However, I also believe balance is key with everything in life. As such you'll find me taking my gasoline offroad motorcycle to go camping in the middle of the mountains somewhere.

Personally we do what we can, but on the grand-scale of the world and especially corporations things need to change.

5 Point summary

1. Clarity of Direction and Reality-Based Governance

Clear priorities, measurable outcomes, and political positioning that goes beyond well established talking points. This includes the willingness to openly acknowledge and learn from ideological or strategic mistakes. Credibility comes from honesty, not from pretending everything was the right call.

2. Scalable Growth of Smaller Chapters

Build systems and support that actually help smaller chapters grow sustainably. Not just encouragement, but structure, tools, and replication.

3. Effective & Professional Organisation

Operates like a serious pan-European organisation with a lean, structured, and focused on execution over bureaucracy approach.

4. Accountability

No sugarcoating. If something works, we scale it. If it fails, we fix it or kill it. Decisions grounded in reality, not personal preferences.

5. Digital Mindset

Use technology to scale, coordinate, and simplify. We need to improve collaboration, and avoid reinventing the wheel across countries.

Expanded points

1. Clarity of Direction and Reality-Based Governance

Clear priorities, measurable outcomes, and political positioning that goes beyond well established talking points. This includes the willingness to openly acknowledge and learn from ideological or strategic mistakes. Credibility comes from honesty, not from pretending everything was the right call.

More and more Volt is becoming indistinguishable from Green/Liberal parties. We have stopped providing our voter base what initially brought them to us, reality based pragmatic pan-Europeanism.

Across Europe, we need to build a shared image. One that centers around our pan-European ideas, not well established talking points of other parties. Let's become the party synonymous with the European flag. We do not even need the Volt logo, because what our next board needs to do is work with the chapters to turn the European flag into the image of Volt.

How?

1. A shared European campaign team composed of national and local representatives
2. Clear Euro-level playbooks of what successful campaigns across Europe look like
 - a. Minimal requirements, while maintaining freedom to give national/local direction
3. A proper re-evaluation of past campaigns (like the first successful and last failed national Dutch campaign)
4. More local involvement, to bring the grassroots back. Local teams and politicians are a lot more grounded in the reality of the average citizen.

2. Scalable Growth of Smaller Chapters

Build systems and support that actually help smaller chapters grow sustainably. Not just encouragement, but structure, tools, and replication.

The smaller chapters aren't supported enough and the expansion team does not have the right resources to properly help the chapters either. We need structural central management that creates templates and frameworks that we know work.

As one of the core-team people launching Volt Albania and later as the general secretary, I have seen many problems in launching a chapter. The lack of procedure, structure and support is a real problem that finally needs to be addressed. In Albania, the lack of support might have even cost us a seat in national parliament.

How?

1. Improving the stance of dedicated Euro-board co-leads for (smaller) chapters
 - a. Chapters need to be able to reach the European board more easily and request their assistance, as well as keep the Euro board regularly updated on their expansion.
2. Expansion should receive the proper support and resources it needs to support the European board in this process. This process needs to be evaluated and improved.
3. Introduce clear chapter launch gates to help establish the chapter without introducing unnecessary risk of chapters going rogue or collapsing.
4. Hailo Chapter health dashboard
 - a. Chapters, especially smaller ones need a method of communicating with the Volt across Europe. Volt needs a place to request pan-European support, which is actively followed up.

3. Effective & Professional Organisation

Operate like a serious pan-European organisation with a lean, structured, and focused on execution over bureaucracy approach.

More and more Volt is jumping on topics with an activist mindset. As a serious political organisation, we cannot keep jumping on every new current topic with idealistic conclusions. We need to grow out of our political movement phase, into an organisation that grows and supports serious politicians. Professionalism should be at our core when making choices for the future of Europe.

How?

1. Refocus on Volt Academy, to prepare and support our (future) Volt politicians
2. More communication with the national co-presidents in the country council. For a more grassroots approach.
 - a. I propose to involve the country council more in political strategy and overall policy direction of Volt Europa. We cannot lose our grassroots structure and the country council is by far the most efficient way to involve the grassroots into the federal level.
3. Look into the existing mechanisms for political positioning and re-evaluate and then improve them.
4. Professionalise the European co-presidents political role as serious political spokespersons speaking for the entire organisation.
5. In multiple cases, behaviour incompatible with Volt's stated values, including homophobia and transphobia, and serious internal misconduct were not addressed in a timely or decisive manner.
 - a. I will propose to introduce stricter deadlines and to re-evaluate the entire integrity process to create a functioning process.

4. Accountability

No sugarcoating. If something works, we scale it. If it fails, we fix it or kill it. Decisions grounded in reality, not personal preferences.

For the last few years Volt has become stuck in celebrating tiny results or the holding of seats. We do not learn from our mistakes enough.

How?

1. Elections are trial by fire. For example if Volt expands its campaigns across a country by double the effort, a 10% increase is unsustainable and warrants a proper internal evaluation.
2. Clear KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) for key positions like the co-presidency. How is a term going, what are they working on? This needs to be clearly reported on and visible internally.

5. Digital Mindset

Use technology to scale, coordinate, and simplify. We need to improve collaboration, and avoid reinventing the wheel across countries.

We should carry on and expand on what we do well, 21st century politics. We have amazing skilled people internally that can help us achieve our goals here.

How?

1. Let's brainstorm with our tech-team about tools that can help us support democracy across Europe.
2. Rotating social media accounts for political positioning
 - a. As Volt Europa grows into a serious pan-European organisation, people should not have to search for our European spokespersons. Dedicated accounts will be created and rotated for roles like the Volt Europa co-presidents.
 - b. These accounts are for official announcements by Volt Europa, not for weekly lifestyle blogging. Although they should retain a sense of whimsy of course.
 - c. Let's utilize, but not create a dependency on the co-presidents their personal networks.