

Voit

**Vienna is cool,
but...**

election program 2025

160 demands for Vienna

FUTURE  MADE IN EUROPE

Preface

Dear Europeans,

Our election programme for the **Vienna 2025** election embodies our shared vision of making our city more democratic, social, and ecological. It is the result of an intensive and dedicated process, carried out under significant time pressure by volunteers from across Europe. This programme does not claim to be exhaustive or perfectly coherent. Rather, it reflects the diversity of perspectives and ideas that define our movement and unite us all.

Our approach is rooted in evidence-based solutions and best-practices from other European cities. We believe that by looking beyond our own borders, we can discover innovative and pragmatic responses to the challenges of our time. That is why we have deliberately chosen examples that demonstrate how inclusive politics can work – politics that bring people together and embrace diverse perspectives.

The **style and structure** of this programme are as diverse as the people who helped create it. It builds significantly on our 2020 election programme, as many of our demands from that time remain unfulfilled by the City of Vienna. At the same time, it is closely aligned with our European election programme, where further details can be found.

Kudos to our inspired team of volunteers!

How we are joining forces to make the world a better place: Without these incredible people, our election manifesto would have remained nothing more than blank pages:

Erich Adam, Karoline Adam, Manuel Dominikus, Roland Faltejsek, Konstantin Frangenheim, Sascha Neurohr, Oliver Marohn, Antonia Meyer, Moritz Reinthaler, Klaus Schulte, Johannes Seichter, Ricardo Winter and Andreas Wollstein.

Most importantly: Our election manifesto is not a sacred text but a living document. We welcome your ideas and suggestions - because only together can we make Vienna an even better city!

We invite you to read our programme and find inspiration.

If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to reach out to us anytime at policy@voltoesterreich.org. Let's work together to make Vienna an even better place to live!

We hope you enjoy reading our manifesto!

Ina Dimitrieva

Policy Lead Volt Vienna

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Europe is our home – Shaping Vienna with vision and purpose

Our city is facing major challenges – but we are convinced that the best solutions arise when we think beyond borders.

Vienna is not just part of Austria – it is a **European metropolis**. As a pan-European movement, Volt unites people from across Europe to develop innovative, evidence-based and pragmatic answers to the pressing questions of our time.

A Vienna that learns from the best

Many of the challenges we face have already been successfully tackled in other European cities. Volt draws on proven best practices from across Europe and beyond, adapting them to Vienna's specific needs. Our goal is to shape a city that leads the way in democracy, climate protection, economic innovation and social justice.

Politics that engages people

We stand for a policy that is transparent, inclusive and digitally progressive. Democracy thrives on participation – that is why we want to give the people of Vienna a greater voice. From digital participation platforms to citizens' councils, we are committed to building a city where every vote counts and political decisions are transparent.

Sustainable economic management and forward-thinking politics

A thriving city is one that manages its economic affairs sustainably. We aim to promote a regenerative economy that conserves resources, drives innovation, and creates jobs. Vienna should become a European hub for sustainable businesses and start-ups – fostering fair working conditions and strong social protections.

Rethink mobility and climate protection

A livable city needs sustainable mobility. We advocate for a climate-friendly transportation transition: more space for cyclists and pedestrians, efficient public transport, and innovative solutions for urban logistics. We want to make Vienna future-proof and climate-resilient – with smart water management, green architecture, and consistent environmental protection.

Diversity as a strength

Vienna is a city of diversity – and that is precisely what makes it strong. We are committed to an open society where everyone has equal opportunities, regardless of their origin, gender or social background. Education, integration and participation are the keys to a fair and inclusive Vienna.

A plan for the future – and a plan for participation

This programme is not just a collection of ideas - it is an invitation to help shape the city. Together with the people of Vienna, we want to lead the city into a bold, innovative, and just future.

Volt – because Vienna must think European.

I. Strengthening democracy

Current issues

Vienna is facing a growing democratic deficit, as more and more people live in the city, but the number of eligible voters continues to shrink. Around 33% of Viennese residents of voting age are not entitled to vote at the municipal level. This particularly affects 14% of EU citizens, who have only limited voting rights, and 19% of third-country nationals, who are denied any say at all. In total, 560,000 people are excluded from participating in referendums or plebiscites. The main reason for this is that the right to vote is tied to Austrian citizenship, which remains out of reach for many due to strict naturalisation laws and significant financial hurdles. As a result, 18% of Austria's workforce, including a large proportion of lower-paid workers, are excluded from political participation. Although a majority of women in Vienna favor faster and easier naturalisation, meaningful reforms at the federal level remain lacking – reforms that could improve democratic participation not only in Vienna but across other cities and regions. Volt is committed to addressing this issue both in Vienna and at all levels of governance.

Our vision

Our democracy must keep up with the times – it must become more inclusive, transparent, and accessible. Volt is committed to policies that include everyone who lives, works, and contributes to our society. A central pillar of this is the right to vote: Democracy can only function if everyone affected by political decisions is also given a voice. In Vienna and throughout Europe, we want to modernise the right to vote and separate it from citizenship. Our goal is a harmonised European electoral law that allows all EU citizens to participate in elections across Europe, regardless of where their main residence is. At the same time, we call for universal suffrage for third-country nationals who have their main residence in a European country. Those who live, work, and pay taxes here should also have a say. Beyond electoral reform, we need new, innovative forms of citizen participation. Direct democracy must not be hindered by excessive barriers but should instead be strengthened through clear procedures and digital tools. We advocate for citizens' councils with the right of initiative, digital participation platforms that actively involve people in legislation, and greater transparency in political processes. All meetings of the city and district parliaments should be livestreamed to make political decisions more transparent. Our goal is to make Vienna and Europe leaders in modern, digital, and open democracy by 2030. This also means consistently strengthening political integrity: with clear rules on additional income for politicians, a lobby register that ensures real transparency, and effective measures against disinformation. Democracy should not be limited to the ballot box every few years – it must be a vibrant, ongoing process in which everyone can participate. A fair democracy is an inclusive democracy. If we truly want to unite Europe, we must ensure that every voice is heard. Volt is fighting for voting rights that reflect the reality of our diverse society – in Vienna, in Austria, and across Europe.

1. Voting rights for everyone aged 16 and over

Volt is committed to ensuring an inclusive and fair electoral law that grants all people, regardless of their citizenship, a political voice. We advocate for the introduction of voting rights from the age of 16 for all residents of Vienna. This right should apply at both the municipal and district levels, fostering the democratic participation of all people living in Vienna.

With this measure, we aim to strengthen integration and participation in our society, respect the diversity and rights of all residents, and create a forward-looking and just political system. Of course, this requires action at all relevant legislative levels, and we are beginning this effort in Vienna.

2. Facilitating access to politics

Volt is committed to simplifying and modernizing the requirements for new political organizations. We advocate for the consistent use of digital tools to support the formation of new political groups and ensure accessibility at all political levels—municipal, state, and federal. In particular, we call for the introduction of digital support declarations, similar to those used for petitions and referendums.

Additionally, we demand the abolition of the 4% threshold for state and municipal council elections in Vienna and propose the introduction of a substitute second vote.

Through these reforms, we aim to enhance political diversity, expand democratic participation, and ensure that innovative political ideas and movements have a fair opportunity to establish

themselves in Austria's political landscape.

In every election, many votes are wasted when people support parties that fail to meet the electoral threshold. Eliminating this threshold and introducing a substitute vote will allow small parties to participate more effectively in parliamentary democracy.

3. Citizens' councils as a binding body in the municipal council

Democracy in Vienna and Austria is facing major challenges. Many people feel unrepresented or excluded from politics. To strengthen democratic participation and involve citizens in decision-making processes, we call for the introduction of Citizens' Councils as a binding body in the municipal council.

Citizens' Councils act as a bridge between the population and political decision-makers by directly incorporating people's perspectives and needs. Each Citizens' Council should have the right of initiative and active participation in every municipal council meeting. The council consists of randomly selected citizens who reflect Vienna's diverse population in terms of gender, age, origin, profession, and more.

Citizens' Councils must have the authority to submit proposals and recommendations directly to the municipal council. These proposals must be publicly debated and decided upon with justified reasoning. At least four times a year, Citizens' Councils are convened to deliberate on pressing issues such as climate policy, urban development, and social justice. All meetings must be documented, and the results made public. Topics of particular relevance to the population—such as housing policy, transport, and

education—are prioritized. To ensure informed decision-making, citizens must have access to experts and relevant data.

We propose starting with a two-year pilot project in selected Viennese districts. If successful, this model should be expanded across the entire city.

Furthermore, an institutionalized “Future Council” for Vienna should be established as a permanent platform for dialogue and cooperation between various social actors. Based on the “round table” model, it should include political representatives from the municipal government and districts, civil society organizations (e.g., citizens’ initiatives, associations, and NGOs), representatives from business and labor unions, as well as randomly selected citizens, including members of marginalized groups. The aim is to develop joint solutions for current and future challenges by incorporating all relevant perspectives.

Best Practice

Vorarlberg is a pioneer in establishing this new form of cooperation between citizens and politicians, particularly because participation through citizens’ councils has been enshrined in the state constitution. In Berlin, a Climate Citizens’ Council was convened to develop recommendations for the city’s future climate policy. The participants, supported by independent scientists, discussed measures in the areas of transport, buildings and heating, and energy. The resulting recommendations were presented to the Senate and the House of Representatives for discussion. In Aachen, there is a permanent citizens’ council composed of randomly selected citizens who discuss topics proposed by the citizens’ committee. A test phase for the introduction of citizens’ councils is currently underway in Constance.

4. Independent control body for deputies’ additional income

We call for the creation of an independent ethics commission to examine the additional income and potential conflicts of interest of members of parliament. The commission will have access to the relevant financial documents of MPs without requiring these to be made public. Regular audits and reports will ensure the appropriateness of income and side activities. This commission would be specifically responsible for checking compliance with transparency and conflict of interest regulations. By introducing sanctions for incomplete or false information, the Ethics Commission would have the authority to make recommendations or impose penalties in the event of violations. Oversight of private tax returns could enhance citizens’ trust in politics.

Currently, members of parliament in Vienna only have to report their secondary income within predefined income categories. Although secondary employment must be reported, there is currently no comprehensive oversight or sanctions for incomplete information. The disclosure of tax returns could close this gap and enable independent scrutiny.

Best Practice

Great Britain goes further with transparency obligations by requiring detailed information on additional income, shareholdings or land ownership.

5. Online access to all meetings of political bodies

The ability of members of parliament to attend and vote using online tools must be ensured. In addition, the public must be able to participate in parliamentary

meetings digitally. The Vienna City Council already offers live-streamed meetings, allowing the public to follow debates online. Citizens can also attend in person, for example, via the visitors' gallery.

Virtual meetings for political bodies were introduced as a necessary measure during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating that they are both technically feasible and efficient. Online participation in meetings helps MPs balance family, career, and their mandate, enabling a broader range of individuals to exercise their political roles. Furthermore, it strengthens the parliamentary system in times of crisis, such as pandemics or natural disasters.

Live-streaming parliamentary sessions also enables direct and immediate public oversight of debates.

Best Practice

Since January 2021, **Bamberg** has been successfully holding and broadcasting city council meetings in hybrid form as an example for some German municipalities. In the **UK**, the parliament enables hybrid meetings with physical and virtual participation.

6. Citizens' budgets in all Viennese districts and at state level

We call for the nationwide introduction of citizen budgets, where a fixed proportion of both the Vienna state budget and district budgets is allocated to projects proposed and voted on by citizens. Local communities know best what they need and want to implement in their areas. Citizen budgets are a powerful tool for increasing political empowerment and participation beyond elections.

This model should be implemented in all 23 districts of Vienna and extended to the municipal level for city-wide projects.

Each district should allocate a fixed percentage of its budget (e.g., 5-10%) annually for citizen-driven initiatives. In smaller districts, this could amount to between €500,000 and €1 million. Given the €3.8 billion deficit in the 2024 double budget, smaller initial amounts could be set (e.g., pilot projects allocating 1% of each district's budget).

Best Practice

In some Polish cities, such budgets were so well received that many other cities adopted the concept. Meanwhile, some German cities have also implemented it, including Munich, where Volt introduced it.

7. Promoting diversity in political representation

Volt aims to implement a comprehensive set of measures to ensure diverse political representation and participation. These include a mandatory gender quota for top positions on electoral lists, inspired by the Belgian model, regular campaigns to encourage political participation, the expansion of easily accessible advisory centres, the establishment of a 'Vienna is Colourful' scholarship for socially and politically engaged individuals from underrepresented groups, and the extension of active and passive voting rights to third-country nationals, following the Swedish model.

Political representation requires role models and incentives. The power of diversity is fully realized only when different perspectives are represented in parliaments. The Vienna City Council has made progress, with women holding 42% of seats, but the representation of other groups – such as migrants and socially disadvantaged people – remains insufficient.

Data on the political representation of people with a migrant background or from underrepresented social groups is limited. However, it is well-documented that political participation in Vienna is strongly influenced by income and education, disadvantaging individuals from poorer or migrant communities.

8. Quota regulations for people with disabilities

The City of Vienna should actively strive to strengthen the political representation of people with disabilities. To eliminate structural barriers and promote an inclusive democracy, the city is exploring ways to introduce quotas for people with disabilities in the municipal and district councils. A voluntary commitment by political parties in Vienna to include people with disabilities on at least 5% of their candidate lists for municipal and district council elections would be an important first step. By 2030, Vienna should ensure that people with disabilities are not only active as voters but are also increasingly elected as members of the municipal and district councils.

Currently, people with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in political office at both the national and local levels. Austria is obligated under Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to guarantee the full participation of people with disabilities in political life.

Best Practice

By 2024, approximately 3% of MPs in the German Bundestag – 23 out of 709 – were people with disabilities. This stands in stark contrast to their share of the general population, which is around 10%. While representation remains disproportionately low, it marks a starting point. In Austria, no official figures are

available, but the percentage appears to be close to zero.

9. Promotion of the European Accessibility Act

The City of Vienna is committed to the swift implementation of the European Accessibility Act (EAA) and its concretization at the municipal level. Accessibility will be a mandatory requirement for all digital and physical products and services in the political sphere. By 2027, all polling stations in Vienna must be fully accessible (e.g., with wheelchair-accessible entrances, tactile guidance systems, and sign language interpreters).

Despite various opportunities for participation, barriers persist for people with disabilities in Vienna, particularly in accessing polling stations and political information. A study by the AK also indicates that socially disadvantaged groups—often including people with disabilities—participate less in democratic processes.

10. Accessibility in political education

The analogue and digital resources for political education are regularly reviewed for accessibility. Election documents are provided in a standardized, easy-to-read format, as well as in plain language, simplified language, Braille, and digitally accessible formats.

11. Plain language as an admission criterion for political parties

All parties standing for election must proactively provide their election manifesto in plain language. This plain-language version must be easily accessible in the same location as the

standard election programme, without requiring a separate request.

12. Appointment of an accompanying person

Voters may, if they wish, designate a companion to accompany them into the polling booth and provide active assistance during the election.

13. Vienna as a pioneer of digital democracy by 2030

By 2030, Vienna aims to become a leading player in Europe in digital citizen participation by systematically developing and implementing innovative solutions. This includes launching a central platform by 2026 to integrate all participation formats, ensuring accessible and transparent engagement. Additionally, by 2027, a nationwide chatbot service will be introduced, providing citizens with a 24/7 digital contact point for inquiries about political participation. Starting in 2025, hybrid dialogue formats will be introduced, combining physical and digital participation opportunities, with at least two events per year in each district. These initiatives will enhance the efficiency of political participation and further improve access to democratic processes.

14. Central digital citizen participation platform

A standardized platform allows citizens to submit ideas, vote on political issues, and track project progress. Similar to Vienna's open data platform, users can submit proposals that are reviewed and publicly discussed by the city. This enables regular digital surveys or votes on local issues, providing a clear picture of public opinion.

Best Practice

Gerbrunns App-based voting in Germany.

15. Introduction of AI-supported chatbots

AI-supported chatbots offer low-threshold access to political information and opportunities for participation. They explain current political topics, legislative proposals, and urban projects in simple language, making them accessible to everyone. Citizens can participate interactively by asking questions, expressing their opinions, or providing feedback. Additionally, artificial intelligence can help combat disinformation by delivering reliable information and correcting misrepresentations.

Best Practice

Wahl-O-GPT and electify.eu show the potential of specialised chatbots for political orientation. The wahl.chat chatbot is available for the 2025 federal elections in Germany.

16. Development of a Viennese citizen participation app

The Vienna Citizen Participation App empowers citizens to engage in political decision-making anytime, anywhere. It provides push notifications for new projects and votes, localized opinion polls based on postcodes (as seen in Gerbrunn), and feedback loops that keep citizens informed about the outcomes of their contributions.

Best Practice

The 'Democy' app in **Bavaria** successfully implements similar functions.

17. Promotion of hybrid citizen dialogues

A combination of digital and analogue formats ensures inclusivity across all

population groups. Regular digital citizen dialogues, supported by modern video technology, enable broad participation, while in-person events—such as open data meet-ups or workshops—provide opportunities to deepen digital discussions. Additionally, AI-powered tools are integrated into analogue events to analyze opinions in real time, enhancing interactivity and engagement.

Best Practice

Digital Dialogues of the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

18. The Vienna AI Compass for transparent decision-making processes

Transparency in the use of AI in political communication and decision-making can be ensured by publicly disclosing all datasets and algorithms used in chatbots or digital tools. Additionally, an ‘AI Compass’ should be established to inform citizens about how AI is implemented in city administration.

Best Practice

Vienna's existing AI compass in the Open Data project.

19. Combating disinformation through official digital channels

Direct communication between city administrations and citizens can help counteract disinformation. To achieve this, we call for the creation of an independent body that provides real-time communication through official channels such as websites, apps, and social media. Additionally, we propose the introduction of a municipal task force responsible for fact-checking and responding to misinformation.

Disinformation is a growing problem, intensified by its rapid spread through social media and digital platforms. It can undermine trust in authorities, deepen social divisions, and threaten democratic processes. The deliberate dissemination of misinformation—often by state actors or organized groups—is particularly evident in times of crisis, such as pandemics, conflicts, or elections. Therefore, a swift and transparent flow of information from the city administration is essential.

Studies show that direct communication through digital channels, including apps, websites, and social media, is an effective way to combat misinformation and foster a more objective public debate.

Best Practice

The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) coordinates efforts to combat disinformation across Europe through research, fact-checking, and collaboration with platforms. This initiative has contributed to reducing the spread of misinformation and enhancing media literacy among the population.

20. Use of open data to promote collective intelligence

Providing relevant data to citizens and companies fosters the development of innovative solutions. To achieve this, datasets on topics such as transport, the environment, and energy consumption will be made publicly available. Additionally, an innovation fund will be established to specifically support citizen-driven projects based on open data.

21. Implementation of a digital Vienna Citizens' Council

Regularly involving randomly selected citizens in political decision-making

strengthens democratic participation. Digital tools should facilitate the organization and moderation of citizens' councils, ensuring effective deliberation. The results should be published as recommendations for city policy.

These measures foster a transparent, inclusive, and future-oriented democracy in Vienna—placing a strong emphasis on digital innovation and eliminating barriers to political participation.

22. Impact measurement and adaptation of political projects

Volt stands for a policy focused on measurable results rather than ideological dogma. Our goal is not just to plan ambitious projects but to continuously assess their impact and adjust them as needed. Through clear objectives, data-driven evaluations, and regular reporting, we ensure that political measures lead to real, positive changes in society.

We are not interested in symbolic flagship projects but in sustainable and scalable solutions to real problems. Our focus is on feasible, scientifically sound measures that have a long-term impact and can be expanded across Austria and Europe. If a measure proves ineffective, we improve or replace it with better alternatives – drawing from best practices in Austria and across Europe.

This approach guarantees a responsible, transparent, and future-oriented policy that truly meets people's needs.

Our demands on politics:

- All political projects must define clear, **measurable goals** that are publicly accessible. These goals should be based on scientific evidence and aligned with citizens' needs.
- Implement systems for continuous impact assessment of policy measures. These systems must enable data-driven evaluations to determine whether the set objectives are being met.
- Introduce an **'impact check'** for every new law to assess its expected social, environmental, and economic effects.
- Publish regular reports on impact assessment results. These reports should be easily accessible to all citizens, facilitating an open discussion on the effectiveness of political measures.
- **Adapt or replace ineffective policies** based on the findings of impact assessments, ensuring the implementation of better solutions.
- Establish digital platforms and other formats that allow citizens to provide feedback on policies and contribute their own ideas.
- Systematically analyze successful policy measures from other regions in Austria and Europe to identify key lessons and apply them to future projects.
- Publish data on the implementation of political measures to enable independent analysis and evaluation.

II. Promoting the regenerative economy

Current problems

Europe and Vienna are experiencing economic stagnation following multiple crises. Inflation and rising living and production costs are threatening prosperity and putting companies under pressure. In order for the EU to remain competitive in a global market dominated by the USA and China, the digital and green transformation must be accelerated on a large scale.

Vienna is involved in numerous initiatives for decarbonisation, renewable energies, and the circular economy. However, there is no transparent overview of their effectiveness or progress toward targets. The population has limited insight into political measures and their impact on a sustainable economy.

At the same time, Vienna has long struggled as a business location due to a lack of innovation, bureaucratic hurdles, and unfavourable conditions for start-ups. Compared internationally, Vienna lags far behind cities such as London, Berlin, and Munich in the development of green and tech start-ups.

Our vision

Vienna should remain the most livable city in the world – even amid profound ecological and social change. To achieve this, Vienna’s economy must become sustainable: regenerative, fair, and operating within planetary boundaries.

Successful concepts such as Doughnut Economics are already providing inspiration at the municipal level, for example, in Brussels. For Vienna to regain economic momentum, it needs the innovative power of start-ups and social businesses to actively drive this transformation and build bridges to a regenerative economy of the future.

Vienna as a European hub – With its strategic location between Bratislava, Prague, and Budapest, Vienna has the potential to become a leading economic center in Central Europe — serving as a hub for sustainable innovation and entrepreneurial transformation.

23. Digital administrative processes and ‘one-stop shop’ for start-ups

The establishment of start-ups and social businesses will be streamlined through a centralized digital ‘one-stop shop’ that consolidates all essential steps, including business registration, tax registration, and funding applications. Special emphasis will be placed on supporting sustainable projects with targeted advice and digital tools. This approach reduces bureaucratic hurdles, saves time, and enhances Vienna’s appeal as a hub for innovative enterprises.

24. ‘Vienna Innovation Fund’ to promote green and social business models

An urban innovation fund will actively support sustainable technologies and social enterprises by providing financial aid and fostering partnerships between universities, businesses, and the city. This initiative strengthens Vienna’s role as a leader in sustainable innovation and drives economic transformation in alignment with smart city goals.

25. Establishment of a network of co-working spaces and innovation centres

Green and social start-ups will be supported through an urban network of co-working spaces and innovation centers, complemented by financial incentives such as tax breaks and grants. This infrastructure fosters creativity and collaboration, strengthening Vienna’s position as a leading start-up hub in Europe.

26. Programme to recruit international talent for the sustainable economy

Vienna should develop an appealing program that attracts international specialists by combining job opportunities with sustainable career prospects. Additionally, further education programs in the fields of the green economy and social entrepreneurship should be expanded. This will enhance Vienna’s innovation capacity and strengthen its competitiveness in the global market.

27. Sustainability standards for companies with public contracts

Companies awarded public contracts should be required to meet binding sustainability criteria. Simultaneously, investments in circular economy initiatives and pilot projects based on the doughnut economics model should be encouraged. These measures will promote economic development while respecting planetary boundaries.

28. Vienna Future Council for the Promotion of a Regenerative Economy

A Future Council, comprising representatives from start-ups, science, civil society, and politics, will actively guide the transition to a regenerative economy. Special support will be given to projects such as urban farming and innovative greening concepts to restore natural resources and promote sustainability in Vienna.

29. Start-ups: faster start-ups by removing hurdles

Despite the potential of start-ups as drivers of innovation for the Viennese economy, founders face major challenges. Uncoordinated initiatives, fragmented information across multiple platforms, and bureaucratic hurdles complicate the start-up process. These factors create a significant barrier to entry, particularly for highly qualified professionals and those without a strong command of German.

To strengthen Vienna as an attractive hub for business start-ups, a centralized digital platform is needed to streamline the start-up process. This platform should reduce bureaucratic complexity, enhance transparency, and consolidate all relevant information. It should offer content and advisory services in at least German and English, evolving continuously in collaboration with the Viennese start-up community.

Core functions of the platform:

- **For Founders:** All necessary forms, applications, and appointments for administrative procedures are available and bookable online. A dedicated service center provides fast and competent support.
- **For Skilled Workers from Germany and Abroad:** Welcome desks assist new arrivals with comprehensive information on administrative processes, housing, childcare, and other essential topics.
- **Transparent Funding Landscape:** All public programs supporting the start-up ecosystem—such as start-up competitions, funding initiatives from the Vienna Business Agency, and university-led programs—are centrally listed.

- **Centralized Networking:** Jobs, events, and opportunities for start-ups, investors, co-working spaces, and accelerators are centrally advertised on the platform.

Vienna as a start-up metropolis - our measures:

Start-ups play a vital role in driving innovation and maintaining Vienna's economic competitiveness. They create jobs, advance technological developments, and contribute significantly to ecological and social transformation. To help Vienna reach its full potential as a European start-up hub, we are committed to the following measures:

- **Enhanced financial security:** State-level start-up grants will be expanded, and the VAT exemption threshold for young companies will be increased.
- **Easier access to capital:** Tax incentives for institutional investors will facilitate access to private venture capital.
- **Strengthening networks and incubators:** Start-up networks, incubators, and accelerators will receive targeted support.
- **Support for social start-ups:** Social start-ups will benefit from increased support. Additionally, the responsible ownership model will be promoted as a new corporate structure with tied assets.

These measures are intended to make Vienna a leading centre of innovation in Europe and offer start-ups the ideal conditions for a successful future.

30. Comprehensive zero-waste programme for Vienna

Vienna should implement an ambitious zero-waste program that focuses on waste prevention, reuse, and recycling. This includes promoting reusable packaging, repair initiatives, and upcycling networks. Public awareness campaigns should educate citizens on waste reduction strategies. These measures are essential to reducing waste volumes and achieving climate neutrality by 2040.

Austria currently recycles 62% of its municipal waste, ranking third in Europe but still trailing behind frontrunners such as Germany, which achieves a 71% recycling rate. Residual waste analyses reveal that valuable raw materials—such as paper, plastic packaging, and glass—continue to be discarded incorrectly. Vienna can further improve its recycling rate through targeted measures such as reusable systems and repair initiatives.

Best Practice

Ljubljana was the first European capital to introduce a zero-waste target and already recycles over 68% of its waste.

31. Expansion and modernisation of the recycling infrastructure in Vienna

The City of Vienna must further enhance its recycling infrastructure, particularly by constructing modern sorting facilities and optimizing existing systems. Although the city already boasts a high recycling rate, there is still room for improvement in separating recyclable materials from residual waste. The efficiency of sorting plastics, metals, and glass should be increased through the implementation of innovative technologies, such as near-infrared scanners.

Best Practice

In **San Francisco**, 80% of waste is recycled or composted using state-of-the-art sorting facilities.

32. Municipal programme for urban mining

Vienna is launching an urban mining program to systematically collect and recycle valuable building materials from existing structures. Materials such as concrete, steel, and wood will be recovered, particularly during refurbishments and demolitions. This initiative promotes a more sustainable construction industry while reducing reliance on primary raw materials. Currently, construction and demolition waste accounts for a significant portion of Austria’s total waste, amounting to approximately 46 million tonnes annually.

Best Practice

Amsterdam is actively pursuing a circular building program, aiming for all new constructions to be entirely circular by 2050.

33. Circular economy projects in the construction industry

The City of Vienna must place greater emphasis on circular construction. Both renovation and new construction projects should adhere to the principles of the circular economy by incorporating modular construction methods and recyclable materials. Pilot projects, such as those in the Nordwestbahnhof area, should be expanded to foster innovative approaches.

34. Mandatory sustainability standards for public procurement

The City of Vienna should implement strict sustainability criteria for all public tenders. Products and services must be durable, repairable, and recyclable. These standards will support the circular economy and encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices.

Best Practice

Copenhagen has developed a sustainable procurement strategy that minimises the purchase of disposable products and favours recycled materials.

35. Food waste prevention programme

Austria generates around one million tonnes of avoidable food waste annually. To tackle this issue, Vienna plans to introduce a comprehensive programme targeting food waste reduction across the entire value chain.

The city has already implemented initiatives such as ‘Food is Precious!’ and FAIRteiler fridges, but aims to expand these efforts further. The proposed municipal programme could incorporate digital tools in commercial kitchens and strengthen cooperation with social organisations to ensure a more effective and sustainable approach to food waste reduction.

Best Practice

Milan has set up a municipal food collection network that distributes surplus food to the needy, avoiding over 100 tonnes a year.

36. Reusable packaging system

A city-wide reusable system for drink packaging could significantly reduce single-use plastic waste. Cities like Freiburg have already introduced deposit systems for reusable cups – a model that could also be implemented in Vienna.

Best Practice

In **Berlin**, ‘ReCup’ was introduced – a reusable cup system with over 8,000 participating partners.

37. Comprehensive education initiative on the circular economy

To support the transition to a circular economy, Vienna should introduce educational programs for citizens and training opportunities for businesses. Key topics such as waste prevention, repair skills, and sustainable consumption should be more deeply integrated into school curricula and lifelong learning initiatives. These measures aim to establish Vienna as a leader in the circular economy and ensure the city’s sustainable development within planetary boundaries.

38. Parental cover for the self-employed

Self-employed parents should receive the same protections and support benefits as employees to ensure they can continue working during parenthood. This fosters equal opportunities and, in particular, enables women to sustain their self-employment despite family responsibilities.

39. Reform of the Viennese parental allowance and promotion of part-time models

The basis for calculating parental allowance must be simplified by including commission models as a salary component. At the same time, part-time parental allowance should be made more attractive and actively promoted to enable more flexible working models for parents. This will provide financial security and support family structures based on partnership. The reform of Vienna's parental allowance aims to make the city more family-friendly by helping parents pursue their individual lifestyles while ensuring equal opportunities for all children. It is designed to promote gender equality, strengthen the economic security of families, and facilitate the balance between family and career.

40. Paternity leave and minimum parental leave

Mandatory paternity leave during childbirth and a minimum parental leave period, modeled after the Swedish system, promote a fair division of family responsibilities and strengthen partnership-based family structures. These measures contribute to greater gender equality both at home and in the workplace. While the specific design of parental benefits and paternity leave falls primarily under federal jurisdiction, Vienna can introduce supplementary measures and incentives to encourage fathers to take parental leave and foster partnership-oriented family structures.

41. Support for single parents

The number of sick leave days for parents caring for their children is to be increased to 45 working days, and children's sick pay is to be raised to 100% of the lost net income. In addition, special dismissal protection is to be introduced for single parents to provide them with better financial and social security.

These measures will offer much-needed relief to single parents.

42. Closing the gender pay gap and ensuring fair pay

Companies should be required to publish gender-specific salary data annually to ensure transparency. Clear legal standards for equal pay, along with a supervisory body to oversee compliance, should guarantee that women and men receive equal pay for equal work.

43. Tax incentives for company childcare

Company childcare facilities are to receive tax incentives to improve the compatibility of work and family life.

44. Binding quotas for women and support programmes for women

The introduction of legally binding quotas of at least 50% women on supervisory boards and in management positions in all companies with more than 50 employees headquartered or maintaining a significant branch in Vienna. These quotas should apply to both public and private companies. If the quotas are not met, companies should face penalties, such as exclusion from public contracts or funding.

For the successful implementation of women’s quotas, a comprehensive approach is necessary—one that goes beyond quotas alone. This includes targeted support programs for women and measures to raise awareness about gender equality. Therefore, we advocate for the creation of dedicated mentoring and further training programs for women in Viennese companies to foster their career development and facilitate their access to leadership positions.

The quotas for women should be enshrined in the Vienna Equal Treatment Act, and a voluntary charter can be introduced, encouraging companies to commit to promoting gender equality and fulfilling these quotas.

Studies show that companies with a balanced gender composition are not only more successful but also act more ecologically and socially responsible. Greater diversity in management leads to better decision-making, enhanced innovation, and stronger competitiveness.

45. Reform of the equalisation levy for people with disabilities

Employers who fail to meet the required quota for employing people with disabilities must pay a compensatory levy. The levy is calculated as a percentage of the average gross monthly income and varies based on company size and compliance level. The scale is as follows:

For companies with 50 to 500 employees:

- **40%** of the average gross monthly income per unfilled mandatory position if no people with disabilities are employed.

- **25%** per unfilled position if up to 50% of the quota is met.
- **10%** per unfilled position if at least 50% of the quota is met.
- No levy applies if the mandatory quota is fully met.

For companies with fewer than 50 employees, a reduced sliding scale applies:

- **25%** if no persons with disabilities are employed.
- **15%** if up to **50%** of the quota is met.
- **5%** if at least **50%** of the quota is met.

For companies with more than 500 employees, A higher contribution applies:

- **50%** if no persons with disabilities are employed.
- **30%** if up to **50%** of the quota is met.
- **15%** if at least **50%** of the quota is met.

In all cases, the levy does not apply if the company fully meets the mandatory employment quota for people with disabilities.

46. Promotion of additional jobs

Additional jobs for people with disabilities, beyond the mandatory quota, should be subsidized through tax credits. Workplaces must be designed to ensure barrier-free and unrestricted access, incorporating features such as ramps, wider door frames, Braille signage, specialized lighting, and height-adjustable desks. Furthermore, all ancillary areas, including break rooms and restrooms, should be appropriately equipped. To ensure compliance, companies should follow binding checklists.

47. Abolition of workshops for people with disabilities

Workshops for people with disabilities (WfBM) will be abolished and transformed into inclusive businesses where employee rights apply and minimum wages are paid. These businesses must be open to everyone. This requirement was already established in 2008 under Article 27 of the UN Convention, which Austria also signed.

Currently, people with disabilities in Austria are often restricted to workshops because they are certified as ‘unfit for work’ at an early stage. Transitioning to the general labour market is difficult, and returning to workshops after an unsuccessful attempt is often not possible. Converting WfBM into inclusive workplaces could help address this issue by providing more rights and fair pay.

At the same time, a flexible system must be established to facilitate movement between different forms of employment. Best practices from Germany demonstrate that models like the ‘budget for work’ can support this transition. Volt advocates for introducing a flexible system that allows people with disabilities to move between workshops, inclusive workplaces, and the general labour market. Additionally, the provision of job coaches or peer advisors is essential to support these transitions.

Best Practice

The **Netherlands** demonstrates that inclusion and fair pay are achievable. There, individuals receive at least the minimum wage, regardless of their disability. Inclusion companies collaborate closely with municipal organizations to gradually integrate people with disabilities into regular employment. In the Netherlands, integrating individuals with disabilities into the mainstream labor market is

common. More than 700 people with autism, Down syndrome, schizophrenia, and various physical disabilities are employed in the Dutch Drechtsteden region—working in supermarkets, fast-food chains, cleaning companies, and the transport sector—while receiving support from social services.

48. Promotion of anonymised application procedures

Anonymized application procedures are implemented and promoted to minimize discrimination in recruitment and ensure equal opportunities for all applicants.

49. Abolition of discriminatory guardianships

Legal guardianship is structured according to the ‘Supported Decision-Making (SDM)’ model to enhance self-determination. This approach empowers people with disabilities to make their own decisions rather than restricting them through legal guardianship. Rooted in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), the SDM model emphasizes self-determination and equal rights for persons with disabilities. By 2030, the City of Vienna aims to ensure that all people with disabilities have access to an SDM system that upholds and strengthens their legal capacity to act.

Best Practice

The ‘Eigen Kracht Centrale’ initiative in the **Netherlands** brings individuals and their families together to encourage independent decision-making. It provides tailored information to support them in making decisions without government intervention.

50. Flexible working time models

Vienna should promote flexible working-time models that not only increase productivity but also improve employees' health. Studies show that 60% of Austrian employees experience high work pressure, which can lead to burnout in the long run. Reducing working hours, such as introducing a four-day week, can lower stress levels and create more time for health-promoting activities like exercise and mindful nutrition.

Vienna could initiate pilot projects for a four-day week with full pay, following the successful example of Iceland. There, the model resulted in higher productivity and an improved work-life balance. In Austria, full-time employees work an average of 40.7 hours per week, while 47 million overtime hours go unpaid annually. Reducing working hours would not only enhance quality of life but also help address the skilled labor shortage.

At the same time, such a measure would contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle by cutting commuting times and reducing the ecological footprint.

Best Practice

In **Denmark**, working time models are strongly focused on work-life balance, resulting in high levels of satisfaction and productivity. In **Iceland**, the introduction of a four-day workweek has improved work-life balance and increased employee satisfaction.

51. Home office and location-independent working to reduce emissions

The City of Vienna should place greater emphasis on promoting remote and location-independent work to reduce CO₂ emissions by decreasing commuting. At the same time, employees benefit from an improved work-life balance, which positively affects both their mental and physical health. Studies indicate that remote work can reduce urban traffic by up to 20%.

Best Practice

Estonia has taken a pioneering role in remote work, thanks to its digital administration systems, offering employees maximum flexibility.

52. Right to unavailability to promote mental health

A "right to unavailability" should protect employees in Vienna from the expectation of constant accessibility, establishing clear boundaries between work and leisure time. This measure contributes to mental health, reduces the risk of burnout, and promotes a regenerative work culture that supports long-term sustainable productivity. The City of Vienna should take measures within its jurisdiction to advance this issue—for example, by initiating workplace health promotion programs or issuing recommendations for municipal companies.

Best Practice

France has already introduced legal regulations that give employees the right to be unavailable outside of working hours.

53. Further training for green competences and digital skills

The City of Vienna should expand further education programs in the fields of the green economy and digital skills. Employees should be empowered to actively contribute to a regenerative economy – whether through sustainable production methods, resource conservation, or innovative technologies. These initiatives not only foster professional growth but also support a healthy and fulfilling life through meaningful work.

Best Practice

Sweden offers financial support for further training in the context of new work requirements with a focus on sustainability.

54. Working time regulations for a regenerative economy

The daily rest period should be flexible when working from home or remotely, as long as it remains voluntary and does not pose health risks. This flexibility enables employees to better align their working hours with personal needs—such as exercise or healthy eating—while also upholding the principles of a regenerative economy.

55. Working models with a focus on regenerative activities

Vienna should actively promote jobs in regenerative sectors such as urban farming, the circular economy, and renewable energies. These professions not only contribute to environmental sustainability, but also provide fulfilling

employment opportunities that enhance the well-being of workers.

Best Practice

Amsterdam favours a regenerative economy with a focus on circular economy projects and thus creates sustainable jobs.

56. Supporting healthy lifestyles through flexible working models

Flexible working hours should enable employees to integrate health-promoting routines, such as regular exercise and a balanced diet, more easily into their daily lives. Companies could be incentivized through tax benefits to implement programs like corporate sports activities or healthier canteen options. These initiatives not only enhance employees' well-being but also increase productivity.

57. Sustainable workplace design

Vienna should require or incentivize companies to implement sustainable workplace concepts – such as energy-efficient offices, recycling programs, or the use of renewable energy. This not only promotes environmental responsibility but also fosters a healthy working environment for employees.

These demands integrate the principles of a regenerative economy with a high quality of life for all citizens of Vienna. They seek to shape economic processes in a way that advances both ecological and social sustainability—placing a clear emphasis on people's well-being and environmental protection.

58. Cross-border economic area

A tightly integrated economic area between Vienna, Bratislava, and Budapest offers enormous potential for growth and development. By pooling resources and creating a shared economic space, the region can attract investment, promote innovation, and generate new jobs. Expanding infrastructure projects, such as high-speed train connections and enhanced digital infrastructure, will improve connectivity and strengthen the region's competitiveness. An integrated labor market with harmonized standards will facilitate the mobility of skilled workers and expand the talent pool. At the same time, closer collaboration between the universities of the three

cities can foster knowledge transfer through joint research projects, exchange programs, and innovation scholarships. These initiatives will create a dynamic, interconnected region that thrives economically, culturally, and scientifically.

Best Practice

Helsinki and **Tallinn** are collaborating on the FinEst Twins project to advance smart city solutions and sustainable urban development. Together, they are fostering innovations such as digital twins and cross-border mobility concepts that enhance quality of life and attract investment. Rail Baltica will connect Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, and Warsaw to the European rail network, providing a fast, sustainable mobility solution for the region with a ferry link to Helsinki.

III. Reshaping mobility and the climate

Current problems

Vienna is facing major challenges in climate, mobility, and public health. While the effects of climate change are becoming increasingly evident, car traffic continues to consume valuable space. Roads and car parks dominate the cityscape, even though cars account for only around 28% of journeys and are mostly left parked and unused. This excessive land consumption significantly limits other forms of mobility, such as cycling and walking. Cycle paths and footpaths remain too narrow and unsafe in many areas, making these modes of transport less appealing.

Although Vienna has made progress in recent years – for example, by expanding the cycle path network and creating new pedestrian zones – these measures are still insufficient to meet the growing demand for sustainable mobility.

In many densely built-up neighbourhoods, traffic congestion is not the only issue; there is also a shortage of green and recreational areas. Paved roads and a lack of trees intensify summer heat and reduce quality of life. At the same time, car traffic is a major contributor to CO₂ emissions, making sustainable mobility a key focus for climate protection.

However, the effects of climate change extend far beyond urban development. The increasing number of hot days and tropical nights places a severe burden on older people and those with pre-existing conditions. Studies show that heat-related mortality is on the rise in Vienna. Meanwhile, air quality is declining due to increased ozone and particulate matter pollution, which exacerbates respiratory diseases such as asthma.

Climate change also accelerates the spread of infectious diseases, as mosquitoes, ticks, and other vectors proliferate more quickly in warmer conditions. Rising temperatures also increase the growth of harmful germs, posing a threat to water and food safety. Additionally, increased UV radiation heightens the risk of skin and eye diseases.

Beyond the physical consequences, climate change also has profound psychological and social impacts. Extreme heat has been shown to increase aggressive behaviour. Social inequalities are further intensified, as low-income groups are disproportionately affected by these challenges.

These developments demand urgent, comprehensive measures to make Vienna more climate-resilient and livable. In addition to sustainable urban planning, more green spaces, cooling measures, and the systematic promotion of alternative forms of mobility are essential to effectively counter the effects of climate change.

Our vision

Vienna already has an ambitious climate roadmap and a well-defined heat action plan. Building on this foundation, we want to further develop the city and transform it into a leading green showcase city that sets new European benchmarks for quality of life and sustainable mobility.

At the heart of this vision is the creation of an environment where a healthy and fulfilling life in harmony with nature is possible for all Viennese.

To achieve this goal, Volt aims to reduce car traffic and redesign public spaces by creating more car-free zones, promoting cycling, and strengthening public transport.

At the same time, Vienna must become a green city of the future that safeguards its citizens from the effects of climate change through expanded green spaces and greening measures, sustainable construction and renovation, and climate adaptation initiatives. Climate adaptation, urban mobility, and sustainable urban development must be considered together – for example, through systematic façade and roof greening, a compact city design that prioritises walkability, a fairer distribution of public space in favour of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, and green spaces, as well as adapting infrastructure to heavy rainfall events.

Through feminist urban planning that accounts for the needs of all people, the aim is to create an inclusive, fair, and vibrant environment that not only promotes public mental health but also fosters a stronger connection to nature and the planet.

59. Car-free Vienna within the ring road

In the future, only taxis, electric carriages, delivery vehicles, ambulances, and other motorized emergency vehicles with the required scanned permits will be allowed to drive within Vienna's Ringstraße. Except in emergencies, walking speed should be maintained, with priority given to the most vulnerable road users: pedestrians before cyclists, and cyclists before electric carriages.

Unfortunately, private motorized transport still occupies too much space in European cities—space that is essential for creating a climate-friendly urban environment. Cities like Paris and London have demonstrated that establishing car-free zones while expanding safe cycling infrastructure can effectively shift private transport towards cycling, public transit, and walking.

A car-free Ringstraße would not only reduce CO₂ emissions but also serve as a strong signal towards achieving climate targets. At the same time, it would allow the city to be redesigned to better meet people's needs. For Vienna, a densely built city, this change would bring health benefits, improve safety, and enhance overall quality of life.

60. Implementation of an environmental zone with a congestion charge within the Vienna Gürtel

Vienna urgently needs an environmental zone with a congestion charge inside the Vienna belt to reduce car traffic and make better use of public space, especially to make the city more climate-resilient.

Experience from cities such as Stockholm and London shows that a congestion charge is one of the most effective measures for managing traffic flows and

reducing emissions. With the expected revenue of around 200 million euros per year, the expansion of public transport in Vienna could be significantly accelerated, which is particularly important for the mobility transition.

The toll should follow a tiered pricing model, with exceptions for certain professional groups such as tradespeople and individuals with disabilities or without adequate public transport connections. A phased approach – initially within the Gürtel, later expanding to all of Vienna – ensures an orderly rollout.

The area within the Gürtel is heavily congested. Despite parking space management, traffic jams and high emissions remain a problem. Additionally, vehicles are becoming bigger and heavier, taking up a disproportionate amount of space. Therefore, private SUVs should be banned from parking in the environmental zone. Fines for non-compliance with environmental regulations should be staggered according to income.

Without additional measures such as a congestion charge, NO₂ limits cannot be met in the long term. A congestion charge provides financial incentives for residents to switch to public transport or alternative forms of mobility. This promotes a sustainable mobility transition and helps Vienna achieve its climate targets.

Best Practice

In **London**, the congestion charge resulted in a 33% reduction in car traffic, while in Stockholm, it led to a 22% reduction. Air quality improved significantly, and the revenue was effectively reinvested into public transport. Studies show that a congestion charge not only reduces traffic but also alleviates congestion, minimizes accidents, and enhances the quality of life.

Experience from Stockholm indicates that delivery and courier services became more efficient due to reduced congestion, which brought economic benefits. No negative effects on the retail sector have been observed.

61. Expansion of park-and-ride capacities on the outskirts of the city

To facilitate the shift to public transport, park-and-ride capacities on the outskirts of the city must be significantly expanded and offered at favorable conditions. At the same time, more charging stations for electric vehicles should be created to promote electromobility. These measures would provide commuters from surrounding areas with an attractive alternative to driving into the city, while also alleviating inner-city traffic.

62. Comprehensive expansion of the car sharing offer

Car-sharing vehicles should be exempt from the congestion charge, while the entire fleet is gradually converted to electric cars. A centralized platform through which all providers can be booked would facilitate access and make usage more attractive. This promotes the transition from individual car ownership to a resource-saving sharing economy. Supporting Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) will enable the integration of all public transport and sharing services into a digital platform that simplifies booking, payment, and route planning.

Best Practice

With its 'Whim' app, **Helsinki** has created a successful Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) system, making private car ownership unnecessary.

63. Advertising campaign to promote climate-friendly mobility

At the same time, a large-scale advertising campaign should be launched to highlight the benefits of alternative forms of mobility, such as cycling and public transport. Posters along busy roads could draw attention to the disadvantages of car ownership while promoting attractive alternatives. These measures will help raise awareness about sustainable mobility and actively encourage the transition to a climate-friendly city.

64. Comprehensive introduction of cycle lanes

To make cycling in Vienna more attractive, dedicated cycle lanes will be established, fully separated from motorized traffic. These lanes should primarily run along side streets to ensure a safe and pleasant environment for cyclists. At intersections without traffic lights, cyclists should always have priority, and all car parking spaces along these streets should be removed. Cycle lanes provide an excellent opportunity to promote cycling while simultaneously enhancing safety and comfort for cyclists. They represent a crucial step towards a sustainable transition in mobility.

65. Fundamental improvement in the quality of the cycle network

The existing cycle path network in Vienna must be designed so that every family, regardless of age or experience, can cycle safely through the city. Cycle paths should be wide, well-marked, and, wherever possible, structurally separated from motorized traffic. Gaps in the network need to be closed to ensure that all cycle

paths are interconnected, eliminating abrupt ends. A continuous, high-quality network not only enhances safety but also makes cycling a more attractive alternative for a larger number of people.

66. Opening all one-way streets to cycle traffic

Following Belgium's example, all one-way streets should be open to cyclists traveling in the opposite direction, provided there is sufficient width for safe passing and the maximum speed is limited to 30 km/h. This would not only make cycling routes easier, but also raise awareness at junctions, contributing to the safety of all road users. Such a measure is simple to implement and reinforces the position of the bicycle as an equal mode of transport within the city.

The proportion of open one-way lanes varies significantly across districts, ranging from 10% in Döbling to 73% in Währing. In Währing, 35% of one-way lanes were opened within just five years. A city-wide opening of one-way lanes would help equalize these disparities between districts.

Best Practice

The example of **Brussels** demonstrates that large-scale implementation is possible. In Brussels, 80% of the one-way lanes were opened within 7 years.

67. Protection against bicycle theft through innovative solutions such as bicycle boxes

In order to further improve the quality of Vienna as a cycling city, measures must be taken to combat bicycle theft. Secure parking facilities, such as lockable bicycle boxes in central locations, can encourage more people to use bicycles as their primary mode of transport. Protection against theft is a crucial factor in building confidence in cycling.

68. Expansion of the city bike network in the outer districts

The city bike system should also be expanded to the peripheral districts to provide all Viennese residents with access to a flexible and affordable bike rental service. A comprehensive system would make it easier, especially for commuters and occasional cyclists, to incorporate bikes into their daily mobility. This would not only promote environmental awareness but also ease the strain on public transport and reduce car traffic in the city.

69. Establishment of green streets to create new green spaces

In order to create more green spaces in Vienna, side streets with little traffic will be transformed into parks with pedestrian pathways. These streets will be closed to all motorized traffic, except for delivery vehicles, waste collection, and the fire brigade, whose access will be ensured via wide pedestrian paths. Bicycle traffic will be allowed but strictly separated from pedestrian paths with dedicated bike lanes. Where possible, the paths will remain unsealed, and watercourses will be integrated. This initiative goes well beyond the previous 'cool streets' program and provides an effective solution to the urban heat island effect.

70. Expansion of roadside greenery to improve the microclimate

Parking strips along roads should increasingly be planted with trees to cool the shaded areas and reduce the heat emitted from the ground at night. Roads facing east-west, as well as wide roads and intersections, should be prioritized due to their exposure to intense solar

radiation. Focusing on biodiversity in planting also promotes species richness within the city. Studies have shown that the temperature difference under tree canopies can be as much as 10 °C, which contributes to a sustainable improvement in the urban climate.

71. Final cancellation of the Lobau motorway project

The City of Vienna and the federal government should terminate the Lobau motorway project once and for all and instead invest in sustainable mobility solutions.

The Lobau motorway project contradicts Vienna’s and Austria’s climate goals, as it promotes motorized private transport and threatens valuable natural areas in the Donau-Auen National Park. Transport already accounts for over 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in Vienna, making a sustainable shift in transport urgent.

Instead, funds should be allocated to a modern mobility concept focused on rail transport, local public transport, active mobility, and regional cooperation. A direct S-Bahn connection between Groß Enzersdorf and the 22nd district (e.g., Aspern Nord) with a link to the city center would significantly reduce commuter traffic by car. An extension of existing tram lines, such as line 26 to Groß Enzersdorf, could also be realized. Citizen participation should engage the local populations of Groß Enzersdorf and the 22nd district in the planning of future mobility solutions through workshops, dialogue events, and online participation platforms.

Best Practice

Examples from cities such as **Zurich**, **Copenhagen**, and **Helsinki** demonstrate that such measures not only make

ecological sense but also significantly enhance people’s quality of life.

72. Promotion of freight transport by rail

We call for the expansion of multimodal logistics centers in the Vienna area to facilitate the shift of freight transport from road to rail. This measure aims to increase the proportion of freight transported by rail, thereby reducing CO2 emissions in the transport sector.

Best Practice

Rotterdam has used multimodal freight logistics to reduce lorry traffic and increase efficiency at the same time.

73. Legal adjustments for sustainable road construction

We support the reform of the Federal Roads Act and the introduction of a mandatory climate impact assessment for all road projects. Projects that do not align with climate targets must not be authorized. We also advocate for legal regulations that prioritize investments in public transport over new road projects.

Best Practice

In **Sweden**, infrastructure projects are regularly assessed to ensure their compatibility with national climate targets.

74. Use of climate-friendly materials for road surfaces

When constructing new roads and maintaining existing ones, asphalt and metal surfaces should be replaced with light-colored concrete, natural stone paving, or gravel-bound surfaces. These materials reflect more sunlight and absorb less heat, helping to reduce the temperature difference between the city

and its surroundings. This approach is essential for the sustainable adaptation to climate change.

75. Expansion of tactile guidance systems and orientation aids

Tactile guidance systems and acoustic orientation aids must be expanded throughout Vienna. Blind and visually impaired individuals in Vienna often encounter inadequate or malfunctioning guidance systems (e.g., guiding strips that lead to nowhere). Acoustic traffic light signals are not available everywhere and are often deactivated at night.

- Expand tactile guidance systems at all major transport hubs (e.g., railway stations, bus stops).
- Install acoustic signals at all traffic lights and ensure they are active 24/7.
- Introduce digital orientation aids, such as navigation apps like 'BlindSquare', to provide accessible routes. Apps like 'BlindSquare' assist visually impaired individuals in navigating complex environments by offering real-time information on obstacles, traffic, and accessible pathways.

Best Practice

Cities such as **Bremerhaven** rely on speaking bus stops and city maps set to music, which help with safe orientation. In Münster, obstacles like posts are color-coded to make them more visible—a simple but effective measure for people with visual impairments.

76. Barrier-free public transport infrastructure

All public transport and stops must be fully accessible. While many modes of transport in Vienna are already barrier-free, issues persist with malfunctioning ramps, narrow entrances, and a lack of tactile markings at stops.

The following measures are proposed for Vienna:

- Ensure that all transport ramps are fully functional.
- Introduce tactile markings at all stops.
- Provide training for drivers on how to assist people with reduced mobility.

Best Practice

In **Wiesbaden**, all buses are barrier-free and bus stops are equipped with tactile waiting areas to show the way.

77. Promotion of barrier-free conversions

The City of Vienna should expand funding programs for private conversions (e.g., apartments, shops). Currently, Vienna offers subsidies for accessibility-related conversions (e.g., stairlifts, door widening), but access to these programs is often hindered by bureaucratic complications.

- Simplify the application process for subsidies.
- Increase funding for barrier-free conversions.
- Introduction of a bonus programme for companies that make their premises barrier-free.

Best Practice

Cities such as **Münster**, where simple application procedures for barrier-free measures are already in place, could serve as models for adaptation.

78. Raising awareness through publicity campaigns

The City of Vienna should launch awareness campaigns to emphasize the importance of accessibility. Many barriers arise due to a lack of awareness among planners, architects, and the general public.

- Launch a campaign under the motto ‘Barrier-free Vienna 2030’
- Establishment of dialogue forums between people with disabilities, planners, and decision-makers
- Sensitize companies by awarding them “Barrier-Free Certified” certificates.

Best Practice

Cities such as **Wiesbaden** organise regular meetings between politicians and those affected in order to work out solutions.

79. Greening facades and roofs

New buildings should be required to provide at least as much green space on façades and roofs as their floor area. For existing buildings, greening should be supported through funding programmes. Urban buildings, particularly underground stations, universities, and government offices, offer significant potential for large-scale greening. This measure effectively utilizes unused areas to improve the urban climate and enhances Vienna’s role as a model in climate protection.

80. Climate-friendly building and heating

We support Vienna’s ambitious climate protection targets and advocate for environmentally friendly construction practices. New buildings should always make efficient use of roof surfaces for solar energy, greenery, or water collection. A combination of green roofs and photovoltaics is particularly effective, as the plants cool the solar panels, increasing their output by up to 4%.

Additionally, the mix of light, shade, and moisture on these roofs promotes biodiversity. Green roofs and walls adhere to the sponge city concept, helping to reduce heat, improve air quality, and store water. They also ease the burden on the sewage system by enabling better storage and infiltration of rainwater.

Best Practice

Many **German** cities, **Amsterdam**, **Oslo** and **Copenhagen** already rely on sponge city concepts.

81. Promotion of private courtyard greening to increase biodiversity

Homeowners should be encouraged to green their courtyards through subsidy programs, utilizing native and insect-friendly plants. Green courtyards not only enhance the microclimate but also offer a habitat for animals and plants in urban areas.

82. Redesign and re-naturalisation of the Wien River

The Wiental offers great potential as a local recreation area for densely

populated districts such as Margareten and Mariahilf. The River Wien should be redesigned to make it accessible and enjoyable again, similar to the successful transformation of the Liesingbach. Existing concepts for renaturation must finally be implemented, as measures like the 1st Wiental Terrace alone are insufficient to fully exploit the area’s potential.

83. Integration of the sponge city concept in all greening measures

The sponge city concept focuses on designing urban spaces that can absorb, store, and release rainwater when needed, much like a sponge. Initiatives such as green streets and roadside greenery play a significant role in reducing impervious surfaces, thereby effectively supporting this concept. The sponge city approach is a fundamental element of climate-resilient urban planning in Vienna.

84. Promotion of renewable energies through local projects

We support the increased promotion of local energy projects by cooperatives and municipalities, as well as greater publicity for existing programs. Additionally, we are committed to expanding and financially supporting ongoing initiatives. To increase acceptance and strengthen local value creation, the local population should be involved in these projects. Decentralized energy projects are essential for a successful energy transition.

Best Practice

In **Belgium**, many citizens’ cooperatives have been providing environmentally friendly energy at a fixed basic price for

decades, independent of large corporations. Since 2018, the city of **Tübingen** has implemented a photovoltaic obligation, achieving positive results. Now, **Baden-Württemberg** has introduced a similar regulation across the entire state.

85. Improvement of water management & flood protection

Improved water management helps prevent ecological damage and promotes biodiversity. We advocate for the implementation of a separate wastewater system to drain rainwater and wastewater independently. This would reduce the burden on water treatment plants and prevent untreated wastewater from overflowing into the Danube.

We call for the expansion of decentralized water reservoirs, such as green walls, green roofs, and parks with retention basins, to capture rainwater. Additionally, parking lots should be equipped with mandatory infiltration systems, such as green trough stones, filters, and activated carbon. This ensures that water flows more slowly into the sewage system, mitigating flood waves. These measures also help maintain the groundwater table.

Best Practice

Copenhagen serves as a role model for sponge cities to prevent flooding. In **Germany**, there is a model project on the Glems River, guided by the principle of ‘Municipal Heavy Rain Risk Management’.

86. Climate adaptation and heat protection

We support the measures outlined in the Vienna Climate Protection Plan and aim to expand upon them.

Nature-based solutions for heat protection are sustainable and should be

prioritized when they are as effective as technical measures. These solutions also contribute to climate protection, biodiversity, the water cycle, and green urban development. This includes sufficient greening with urban trees, as envisioned by the Berlin Tree Decision or implemented in Ljubljana. The effectiveness of these measures should be regularly reviewed.

Heat and health protection in the summer should be supported through flexible working hours, operating hours, and opening times. Small green spaces, such as pocket parks or climate boxes, should provide all residents of Vienna with quick access to cooling. We promote the greening of roofs and façades to make cities cooler and advocate for the financing of public cooling rooms for particularly vulnerable individuals. Vienna offers an online overview of drinking fountains, cooling rooms, and public toilets. This information must be more effectively communicated, and the infrastructure should be further expanded, especially in densely populated neighborhoods. Building regulations must be updated accordingly to improve heat protection through insulation and shading.

Climate adaptation and heat protection must be socially equitable. More public green spaces for cooling and energy-efficient, climate-resistant new buildings in social housing will contribute to more resilient neighborhoods. Subsidies for communal green spaces will help protect all citizens.

Public sports facilities and playgrounds need sufficient shade to ensure they can be used in the summer. Heat protection should be integrated into school curricula and educational institutions, such as through school gardens that provide shaded schoolyards. More training for

companies should raise awareness of sustainability and heat protection and improve occupational health and safety.

Best Practice

Ljubljana is one of the most sustainable cities in Europe, with a vision for development aimed at 2025, which has been pursued since 2007. Currently, nearly 75% of the city is green, featuring over 50,000 trees. Each resident enjoys an average of 542 m² of green space, compared to around 115 m² in Vienna. The city center is predominantly car-free, encouraging cycling and public transportation, including electric bike and car-sharing programs. Additionally, Ljubljana is investing in the energy-efficient renovation of public buildings, featuring green roofs and external shading.

87. Expansion of the monitoring of Vienna's water quality

We call for the City of Vienna's climate roadmap to be expanded to include specific measures aimed at safeguarding water quality, improving air quality, and protecting public health. To ensure water quality, we recommend enhancing monitoring, particularly with respect to bacterial contamination. Furthermore, an early warning system should be implemented to detect contamination in tap water at an early stage.

88. Expansion of air quality monitoring

To specifically improve air quality and protect public health, we are calling for the development of an air quality plan focused on reducing ozone and particulate matter pollution. Enhanced pollen monitoring, for example, through apps, should provide timely warnings for

individuals with allergies. Additionally, we support exploring short-term measures, such as spontaneous Sunday driving bans in the city center, to reduce acute pollution peaks.

89. Measures to prevent mental health risks caused by heat

Heat also impacts the mental health of the Viennese population. Along with an increase in anxiety disorders and depression, the risk of suicide is also rising. Aggressive and antisocial behavior is similarly on the rise. In addition to the current climate roadmap and heat protection plan, we support the expansion of psychological counseling services and hotlines specifically addressing heat-related psychological stress.

90. Including disaster preparedness and evacuation plans

Disaster preparedness and evacuation plans in Vienna must be designed to be accessible and actively involve people with disabilities, as they are four times more likely to die in natural disasters, such as floods or heatwaves. During emergency situations, there is often a lack of accessible emergency shelters, warning systems, and trained personnel. The 2022 flood disaster in the Ahr Valley (Germany) tragically highlighted these shortcomings when twelve people with disabilities died in a facility because they could not be evacuated in time.

Volt stands for:

- **Barrier-free emergency shelters:** Equipped with ramps, tactile guidance systems, and disability-friendly sanitary facilities.

- **Accessible warning systems:** Implementing warning messages in sign language, plain language, and both acoustic and visual formats.
- **Training for emergency services:** Ensuring that emergency services and authorities are trained in interacting with people with disabilities.

Best Practice

In the **Philippines**, the involvement of people with disabilities in disaster response planning has significantly improved safety.

91. Designing climate protection measures inclusively

Climate protection measures in Vienna must be designed in a way that does not create additional barriers for people with disabilities. For example, climate protection measures such as the ban on plastic straws or electric charging points that are not wheelchair accessible have unintentionally created new barriers for people with disabilities. To prevent such issues, it is crucial that those affected are involved in the planning process from the outset. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities explicitly calls for all measures to be designed inclusively.

Volt stands for:

- **Ensuring participation:** People with disabilities must be permanently included on committees that make decisions regarding climate protection measures.
- **Promoting barrier-free infrastructure:** New technologies, such as e-charging stations and

cycle paths, must be designed to be accessible to people with mobility impairments.

- **Evaluating existing measures:** Climate protection projects should be assessed for their impact on people with disabilities.

92. Inclusive protection against the health consequences of climate change

People with disabilities must be better protected from health risks such as heatwaves and air pollution. Heatwaves, water shortages, and increased pollen counts disproportionately affect people with disabilities, particularly those with limited thermoregulation due to conditions like spinal cord injuries or allergic asthma. Access to healthcare services is often challenging, further exacerbating existing inequalities.

Volt advocates for:

- **Creating cooling rooms:** Establishing accessible ‘cooling centers’ during heatwaves.
- **Improved access to health services:** Barrier-free medical practices and mobile health services for especially vulnerable groups.
- **Information campaigns:** Raising awareness about the health risks of climate change using plain language and sign language.

93. Data-based planning and research

Vienna needs more detailed data on how people with disabilities are affected by climate change to develop targeted and effective

measures. There is currently a lack of specific data regarding the impacts of climate change on individuals with various disabilities. Without this essential information, planning effective interventions becomes impossible. International best practices show that data-driven approaches are key.

Volt stands for:

- **Collecting data tailored to specific disabilities:** Conducting regular studies to assess how people with disabilities are affected by extreme weather events and climate change.
- **Promoting research:** Partnering with universities and NGOs to develop innovative solutions.

IV. Promoting diversity and an open society

Current problems

Vienna is a vibrant, diverse, and multicultural city that benefits from migration. Different cultures enrich social life, foster solidarity, and strengthen an open, tolerant society. Nevertheless, migrants and foreign nationals in Vienna face considerable challenges, as they are often treated as second- or third-class citizens. Since 2015 in particular, the political climate has worsened due to increasingly restrictive and right-wing federal policies, negatively impacting integration.

One of the biggest problems is access to the labour market, as many migrant women require a work permit, which is often difficult and time-consuming to obtain. The Labour Market Service (AMS) operates slowly, and many employers shy away from the complex application procedures. There is also a lack of practical integration programs for people without secure residence status.

Significant barriers also exist in accessing basic services: The failure to recognise foreign qualifications means that many affected individuals are unable to gain access to regular jobs and, in the worst case, even risk losing their homes. For refugees from Ukraine, uncertainties remain regarding the offsetting of income against social security contributions, as well as a lack of long-term plans for professional integration. At the federal level, integration is often only permitted once a person has secured permanent residency, meaning that many people remain without prospects for years instead of utilising the time for qualification measures.

Even in sectors facing labour shortages, the recognition of foreign qualifications remains unnecessarily difficult, preventing qualified professionals from entering the job market.

At the same time, the asylum system is overburdened, and many asylum seekers find themselves in precarious situations. The federal government is tightening procedures instead of creating solutions. The City of Vienna is under immense pressure as it is responsible for providing basic care to those in need, while the federal government continues to obstruct integration efforts with restrictive policies. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection in particular often lack a stable residence status, further reducing their chances of finding work, housing, and social security.

Overall, Vienna is struggling with the consequences of an anti-integration federal policy that hinders the city's ability to offer migrants and refugees real prospects—despite their undeniable contributions to society and the economy.

Our vision

Our vision is an open, tolerant, and equal-opportunity society in Vienna, where every person – regardless of their origin, nationality, ethnicity, religious beliefs, or other affiliation – has the same opportunities to thrive.

To achieve this, we need a functional and people-centered migration, integration, and anti-discrimination policy, not only in Vienna but throughout Austria and Europe. Integration

must be enabled from the outset, without uncertainties about residence status, future prospects, or social belonging.

Every person deserves dignified treatment that empowers them to lead a self-determined life, earn their own income, and actively contribute to society, instead of being forced into dependency on social benefits and poverty by bureaucratic hurdles. Secure residency, reliable reception, and a sense of belonging to local communities are essential for reducing psychological stress, especially for people who have already experienced significant hardships on their journey to Europe.

We want to promote labour market integration while simultaneously addressing the shortage of skilled workers through targeted training measures and streamlined recognition of foreign qualifications, ensuring that both migrants and society as a whole benefit. Every person is valuable and can become part of our diverse city – Vienna should be a role model for a forward-thinking, solidary, and equitable society.

Volt is committed to equality and the protection of minorities, with a focus on LGBTQ+ people, ethnic and cultural groups, and national minorities. Specifically, Volt advocates for the legalisation of same-sex marriage, reforms to parentage law, the strengthening of trans and intersex rights, and a nationwide ban on conversion therapies.

In the area of anti-discrimination, Volt aims to implement awareness-raising measures for the police and judiciary, improve the documentation of hate crimes, and strengthen conflict counselling centres in the education system. Volt is committed to addressing structural racism through confronting Austria's Nazi past, repatriating looted cultural property, and combating racial profiling.

To ensure the full participation of all people, Volt calls for affirmative action policies in companies, confidential reporting channels for discrimination, and the promotion of diversity in education. The protection of national minorities, such as the Sinti and Roma, as well as the strengthening of Jewish life and the fight against anti-Semitism, remain central concerns.

94. Enabling integration from day one

Refugees and **migrants should have access to language courses, educational opportunities, and community services during the asylum and immigration process. Programs like 'Integration from Day 1' demonstrate that early action can improve the likelihood of successful integration while helping alleviate the shortage of skilled workers.

Refugees should be granted secure residence status at an early stage and receive clear, comprehensive information about their rights and available opportunities.

A secure residence status reduces psychological stress and provides the stability necessary for active participation in society. Basic services must be delivered in a humane manner to prevent the creation of dependencies.

Best Practice

Berlin offers accessible German courses and community service opportunities for refugees through the Refugee Welcome initiative. The goal is to make productive use of the time spent waiting for the asylum process to be completed.

95. Facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications

The City of Vienna aims to simplify and accelerate the procedures for recognizing qualifications acquired abroad. Many migrants possess valuable skills that remain untapped due to bureaucratic obstacles. Quick recognition enables these skills to be integrated into the labor market, promoting the self-reliance of those affected.

Best Practice

Canada offers a fast-track recognition program for professionals in high-demand fields. This includes standardized testing and rapid assessment processes. These programs have helped ensure that professionals can integrate into the labor market more quickly. In Germany, centralized offices, such as the 'Recognition in Germany' portal and regional advice centers, coordinate the recognition of qualifications. There are clear responsibilities and transparent processes available online, making it much easier to access information.

96. Promoting encounters and dialogue

The city of Vienna should expand intercultural projects, such as cooking evenings, sports activities, or neighborhood centers. These initiatives foster mutual understanding and help reduce prejudices. Integration, in the sense of inclusion, is a reciprocal process that is strengthened through encounters based on equality.

97. Strengthening diversity-oriented city administration

The city administration should continue to enhance its diversity skills and ensure that its services reflect the diversity of the population. An integration-focused diversity management approach will allow it to better meet the needs of all residents of Vienna and promote equal opportunities.

98. Prioritise education as the key to integration

Migrants and refugees should have access to educational opportunities, regardless of their residence status, including language courses and vocational training. Education is essential for social participation. Programs such as StartWien demonstrate that targeted educational

measures facilitate entry into the labor market.

99. Promoting the participation of immigrants

Migrants should be actively involved in decision-making processes that impact their lives. This participation strengthens their sense of belonging and empowers them to play an active role in shaping society.

100. Recognising climate- and environmentally-related reasons for fleeing

People who are forced to leave their homes due to environmental disasters, such as droughts, floods, or rising sea levels, should be legally protected in Austria. The growing number of environmental migrants highlights that climate change is not only an ecological issue but also a humanitarian crisis. Studies and international examples demonstrate that environmental disasters already play a central role in migratory movements. Legal recognition would not only provide protection for those affected but also underscore Austria's responsibility in the global fight against the consequences of climate change. Currently, environmental and climate refugees are not covered by the Geneva Refugee Convention, despite often fleeing existential threats exacerbated by climate change. Austria must address this protection gap by explicitly including climate- and environment-related reasons for flight in its asylum laws.

Although the legal recognition of environmental migrants should primarily be regulated at the national level, the city of Vienna can make a significant contribution by supporting these individuals and promoting their

integration through targeted local initiatives. In light of the increasing number of environmental refugees forced to flee due to droughts, floods, or rising sea levels, Vienna, as a cosmopolitan and responsible city, should actively support these people.

Best Practice

Sweden offers subsidiary protection to people whose lives are threatened by natural disasters or environmental degradation. This is irrespective of whether they are explicitly covered by the Geneva Convention.

101. A year of opportunity for people whose asylum applications have been rejected

People whose asylum applications have been rejected should be given the opportunity to work legally for a year and earn the right to a residence permit through employment. This 'year of opportunity' would not only offer those affected a sense of purpose but also promote their integration into society and the labor market. At the same time, companies could benefit from the additional workforce, particularly in sectors experiencing a shortage of skilled labor.

Such a regulation creates a win-win situation: it enables rejected asylum seekers to contribute their skills and integrate in the long term, while the city of Vienna strengthens social and economic stability.

102. Compulsory anti-racist education modules

To effectively combat racism and discrimination, it is essential that everyone is sensitized to these issues

from an early age. The educational modules are designed to impart knowledge, promote critical thinking, and encourage people to reflect on their own prejudices.

The text highlights that racism is deeply rooted in societal structures and is often unconsciously reproduced. Education is key to breaking these patterns and fostering a culture of respect. The text also asserts that all issues related to queerness must be covered in sex education classes, contributing to the elimination of inequalities.

103. Measures against institutional discrimination

Comprehensive independent studies on racism and extremism within security authorities should be conducted, along with the implementation of specific preventive measures. In order to combat institutional racism, it is crucial to objectively assess the extent of the problem and develop targeted awareness-raising and training programs for officials.

BIPoC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) often experience racism when interacting with security authorities, which contradicts the claim of a free and pluralistic society. Furthermore, fostering a critical stance towards racism and discrimination within security authorities should be prioritized, alongside a comprehensive reappraisal of the crimes committed by Austrofascists during the First Republic and the crimes of the Nazi regime.

104. Combating gender-based violence

Expansion of Prevention Programs to Combat Gender-Based Violence in Schools, Youth Centers, and Communities

To effectively prevent gender-based violence, it is essential to begin at an early age by educating young people about respectful relationships, equality, and the dismantling of harmful gender stereotypes. Strengthening the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ individuals plays a crucial role in preventing gender-based violence (see also Chapter V: Taking Social Responsibility).

In this context, we also advocate for a ban on sexist advertising in public spaces. In Norway, such a ban is legally enshrined in the Marketing Act.

105. Protection of vulnerable groups, such as homeless people, Roma and LGBTIQ+

Expansion of Counseling and Support Services for Vulnerable Groups, Especially Homeless People, Roma, and LGBTIQ+ Individuals Affected by Discrimination and Violence.

Vulnerable groups require targeted support to exercise their rights and to be protected from discrimination and violence. The services must be easily accessible and tailored to the specific needs of each group.

Volt emphasizes that Sinti*zze and Rom*nja are often subjected to institutional discrimination, and LGBTIQ+ individuals face disadvantages in various aspects of life. Therefore, it is essential to provide these groups with special protection and to promote their participation in society.

106. Combating discrimination and extremism

Strengthening interreligious and intercultural dialogue to reduce prejudice and promote peaceful coexistence

To counter religiously motivated discrimination and extremism, it is essential to foster dialogue between different religious communities and cultures to cultivate mutual understanding.

Volt acknowledges the importance of combating anti-Semitism and strengthening Jewish life in all areas of society. It also advocates for the fight against racism in all its forms, including anti-Muslim racism. Open dialogue plays a key role in dismantling prejudices and promoting peaceful coexistence.

107. Accessibility in culture and sport

Artistic, cultural, and sports offerings that are accessible to people with disabilities will be subsidized by the state. Volt advocates for the introduction of a mandatory accessibility standard for all state-funded cultural and sports facilities and events. Facilities meeting these standards could receive additional funding.

108. No need for EU citizens to visit the municipal department 35

Currently, EU citizens staying in Austria for more than three months are required to apply for a certificate of permanent residence. This process necessitates a separate visit to the municipal authority, MA 35. To improve efficiency, this certificate could be issued directly during the residence registration at the municipal authority. Such a change would reduce bureaucracy and free up public funds for more important tasks.

109. Written communication with authorities in English

Vienna is an international city, home to many EU citizens who come to work or

study, often without sufficient knowledge of German. Currently, written communication with authorities is primarily in German, making it difficult for them to access important information. Standardized bilingual communication (in both German and English) would improve accessibility and strengthen Vienna's position as an international metropolis.

110. Modernisation of the Nationality Act and facilitation of naturalisation

Austria continues to maintain strict rules for acquiring citizenship. Specifically, the possibility of holding dual or multiple citizenships for EU citizens with long-term primary residence in Austria is virtually nonexistent. While other countries, such as Germany, have modernized their laws to foster European integration, Austria's legislation remains restrictive. Allowing dual citizenship would not only address the democratic deficit—particularly in cities like Vienna, which have a high proportion of EU immigrants—but would also enhance social integration.

The situation regarding citizenship applications in Vienna presents significant challenges. Approximately 45% of all naturalizations in Austria occur in Vienna. However, the naturalization rate, which hovers around 0.7%, remains well below the European average of 2.4%. The processing time for citizenship applications is lengthy, often taking several years. While precise statistics on the rejection rate are unavailable, those affected frequently report a lack of transparency throughout the process. Communication with the MA 35 is often insufficient, with applicants receiving limited updates on the status of their applications or additional requirements. The municipal department 35 is severely overburdened, and despite the addition of nearly 100 new employees, the

authority remains under pressure. Many processes are not yet digitized, which hampers efficiency. Applicants are still required to submit documents in person or by mail, and there is no modern online portal for tracking the status of their applications.

Revenue for Vienna, instead of the federal government: The revenue from naturalization fees (estimated at 4.5 million euros per year) should no longer go to the federal government, but instead be directly invested in the MA 35. This would allow for increased staffing, modernized IT systems, and expanded advisory services.

Acceleration and digitalisation of the application process at MA 35: The processing times for citizenship applications must be significantly reduced through a comprehensive digitalisation of the procedures. This includes the introduction of a user-friendly online portal that allows applicants to submit documents digitally, track the processing status in real time, and communicate directly with the authority. These measures would increase efficiency, reduce the administrative burden, and significantly enhance transparency for citizens. Given the long waiting times, which can currently span years, modernisation is urgently needed.

Increasing Staff and Improving Training at MA 35: To address the excessive workload at MA 35, the staff must be significantly expanded and better trained, especially in intercultural skills and relevant legal fields. Employees with legal training are crucial for handling complex procedures more quickly and in a legally secure manner. Adequate staffing would not only reduce processing times but also enhance the quality of decision-making.

Transparency and Clear Communication in the Naturalisation Process: The

municipal department (Department 35) should publish transparent guidelines that clearly list all required documents, deadlines, and procedural steps. Applicants should be able to easily access information regarding the necessary documents and the duration of each step at any time. Additionally, a telephone service center should be established to provide reliable information to inquiries. This would help build trust in the authority and prevent unnecessary delays caused by missing or incorrect documents.

Introduction of more flexible criteria for securing one's livelihood: The current requirements for securing one's livelihood are complex and create an insurmountable hurdle for many applicants. The calculation should be simplified and made more flexible to better reflect realistic life situations. For example, income from different time periods or income from family members could be considered more comprehensively. This would make access to citizenship fairer.

Regular Evaluation and Reform of the Citizenship Act (StbG): The Citizenship Act should undergo regular reviews to ensure it aligns with the needs of a modern and inclusive society. As an international city, Vienna is particularly impacted by the strict federal legal requirements. A reform could, for example, facilitate dual citizenship or shorten the minimum length of stay for well-integrated individuals. This would not only promote integration but also help address the democratic deficit in Vienna.

Implementation of an accelerated procedure for urgent cases: An accelerated procedure will be introduced for applicants in special circumstances (e.g., those at risk of losing their residence

status or facing professional challenges). This option may require higher fees or additional documentation, ensuring that urgent matters are prioritized and processed promptly.

V. Taking social responsibility

Current problems

In Vienna, homelessness remains a pressing issue, especially during the winter months. Many people are either homeless or live in precarious housing conditions, often due to family crises, unemployment, or health problems. The situation is further exacerbated by rising rents and a lack of affordable housing. Many of those affected are unable to find a long-term solution because emergency accommodation is often overcrowded, and support systems are insufficient to meet their needs. This unstable housing situation not only threatens quality of life but also harms the social and mental health of those affected.

While tobacco consumption continues to pose serious health and environmental risks due to cigarette waste, consistent measures to protect the population remain lacking.

The number of mental illnesses is also increasing, particularly among young people and workers in high-stress occupations. Long waiting times for psychotherapy, a lack of preventive measures, and insufficient support in both schools and workplaces are exacerbating the crisis.

Current drug policy remains overly focused on criminal prosecution and deterrence instead of prioritising prevention, therapy, and social support. This approach has proven ineffective – it does not prevent addiction but often worsens it. At the same time, the criminalisation of users and minor cannabis possession diverts valuable police and judicial resources, while the black market continues to flourish.

Violence against women and other marginalised groups is a serious social problem that must be addressed with determination. By ratifying the Istanbul Convention, Austria has committed to implementing comprehensive measures against gender-based violence. Nevertheless, significant gaps remain in victim protection, prevention, and prosecution. The high number of femicides and violent crimes demonstrates that urgent action is needed.

Our vision

Vienna is at an important crossroads, where social responsibility is no longer just an abstract concept but must be actively implemented and embraced. Our vision is a city where social justice is at the core of a sustainable and livable future. It is the key to guaranteeing the right to housing, health, and mental well-being for all Viennese, regardless of origin, income, or social status.

In this vision, the right to housing is not a luxury but a fundamental, non-negotiable right. We are committed to enshrining this right in the constitution so that adequate and affordable housing for all becomes a guarantee. In the face of rising rents and housing shortages, we want to counteract this trend with innovative measures such as an extended rent brake and a review of retroactive rent reductions. An efficient Housing First programme will ensure that no one has to live on the streets by 2030. We are committed to a combination of affordable housing, the conversion of vacant properties, and targeted psychosocial support.

Protecting and promoting public health is also a central pillar of this vision. A smoke-free Vienna, where preventive measures such as education and smoking bans in public spaces are standard, will become a role model for other cities. At the same time, we are ensuring barrier-free access to psychotherapeutic and psychosocial support, especially for children, young people, and families. We are strengthening mental health prevention in the workplace so that all Viennese can live and work in a healthy environment.

It is particularly important to reach people in precarious circumstances. We are committed to low-threshold healthcare that is accessible to all through walk-in medical care centres and mobile medical teams. Early prevention and the promotion of resilience will improve opportunities for families and young people and reduce social inequalities.

At the heart of this vision is the unconditional protection and promotion of equality, particularly the rights of women and FLINTA individuals.* We are committed to gender-sensitive health care that prioritises non-discriminatory treatment. Another goal is universal access to preventive health measures for women to identify and reduce health risks early on. We also advocate for the legalisation of abortion and unconditional access to abortion services, as well as the promotion of bodily autonomy through transparent and equitable healthcare.

This vision is more than a political programme – it is a promise for a fairer, healthier, and more livable city where every person has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

111. Housing as a fundamental right

Everyone has the right to decent housing as a fundamental right under Article 31 of the Revised European Social Charter. Therefore, the Volt party demands that the right to adequate and affordable housing be enshrined in the constitution. Housing should not be a luxury, but must be accessible and affordable for all.

We support the introduction of a rent cap and advocate for its extension to free contracts and the private sector, where regulations have not been sufficiently effective so far.

In addition, we would like to see retroactive rent reductions as a means of countering the disproportionate rent increases that have already occurred in 2022 and 2023. The 5% cap on rent increases currently proposed for the rental price brake is likely to exceed the inflation rate in the coming years, but high rents are already a reality.

Vienna is a European pioneer in social housing and demonstrates that targeted interventions are possible through measures such as the suspension of rent adjustments until 2025. Nevertheless, land and construction prices continue to rise, which highlights the need for stronger regulations. The 'Right to Housing' referendum, supported by over 134,000 people, underscores the urgent need for action to enshrine the right to housing in law.

112. An efficient Housing First programme to end homelessness

In Austria, 20,000 people officially live without a roof over their heads. In Vienna, around 12,000 homeless individuals were registered in 2023. Experts estimate that the number of unreported cases is at least

twice as high. Emergency shelters are unsafe due to physical and sexual violence, which leads to them being unusable. Many individuals are reported to sleep in the cold during the winter. This is unacceptable for a wealthy country and a city as livable as Vienna. Volt will eradicate homelessness in Vienna once and for all by 2030.

Final establishment of Housing First as a central guideline

The current project-based financing of Housing First programs will be transformed into long-term, standard financing secured by social law. This will ensure continuity and planning security for all participating organizations.

Best Practice

Vorarlberg has successfully implemented the Housing First approach through close cooperation between housing subsidies, social organizations, and municipalities. This has strengthened the collaboration between housing and social policies.

Provision of sufficient affordable housing

Conversion of existing properties: Empty flats and buildings should be systematically repurposed for Housing First. An estimated 90,000 flats are vacant in Vienna. A vacancy tax could help ensure that these resources are used in a socially responsible manner.

A vacancy tax could encourage property owners to make unused living spaces available. Additionally, the construction of new affordable individual apartments in all districts of Vienna should be promoted to ensure social integration.

By 2030, at least 12,000 additional apartments should be made available for Housing First, with the goal of completely eradicating homelessness in Vienna

through a combination of prevention, affordable housing, and psychosocial support.

Best Practice

In **Finland**, the national Housing First programme has almost eradicated homelessness by creating affordable housing in a targeted manner. Social integration is facilitated through support tailored to individual needs, including job placement, psychological and addiction counselling, and access to education and training.

Adjustment of Tenancy Law and Housing Subsidies

Easier access to rented housing: Obstacles to renting a home, such as high deposits or credit checks, should be removed for homeless individuals. The programme could help cover deposits.

Promotion of non-profit property developers: Non-profit housing associations should receive more support to provide affordable housing for the Housing First programme.

Psychosocial Support as an Integral Component

Each participant in the programme is offered voluntary counselling and care tailored to their individual needs. This includes debt settlement, work integration, and support for people with mental health issues. Psychosocial services, such as psychiatric liaison services, should be expanded to better reach people with mental illnesses.

Monitoring and Scaling

A central system should be established to regularly monitor the effectiveness of Housing First. Successful approaches can then be scaled and transferred to other regions. Residents in the affected areas

should be involved in the planning process to promote acceptance and social integration.

The Housing First concept offers a sustainable solution for ending homelessness in Vienna. With long-term financing, sufficient housing, psychosocial support, and regional cooperation, Vienna can meet the EU goal of completely eradicating homelessness by 2030. Best practices from Finland and Vorarlberg demonstrate that this is achievable—provided it is consistently implemented.

Best Practice

Helsinki conducts annual studies on homelessness and regularly evaluates the success of its comprehensive Housing First strategy.

113. Introduction of a vacancy tax in Vienna

Following the example of other Austrian federal states, such as Tyrol and Styria, owners of permanently vacant flats or building land in Vienna should be subject to an annually increasing tax. This measure creates a market-based incentive to discourage speculation and encourage the rental of unused living space or the development of building land.

The vacancy tax will help ease the pressure on the housing market, create additional living space, and reduce land consumption. Given the current housing challenges in Vienna, this is a necessary step to strengthen the right to housing and ensure a high quality of life in the city.

114. Long-term health protection

Volt Vienna is committed to raising awareness about the risks of smoking and second-hand smoke. Additionally, Volt advocates for a smoke-free Vienna,

following a recommendation by the University of Vienna.

Smoking should no longer be allowed in public spaces or on the streets, with this policy being gradually introduced. The European Commission has already recommended a ban on smoking outdoors.

In line with cities like London and Milan, Volt proposes that tobacco products should no longer be legally sold to young people. The legal age for purchasing tobacco will increase by one year every year until the target is reached.

E-vaporizers and disposable vaping products will also be banned, as well as products designed to appeal to minors with bright colors and attractive flavors. Advertising for tobacco products and e-cigarettes will also be prohibited.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), tobacco consumption causes approximately six million deaths worldwide, a number expected to rise to eight million by 2030. The WHO also estimates that around 4.69 trillion cigarette butts are discarded in nature each year. These are more toxic than plastic waste and take up to 15 years to decompose. They are found everywhere, even in playgrounds and natural areas. Animals mistake the filters for food, and in water, just one butt per liter can be lethal to fish.

In Germany, the annual cost of disposing of cigarette butts is around 225 million euros, and smoking significantly increases particulate matter concentration in the air.

The diseases and absenteeism caused by smoking or passive smoking result in enormous economic costs to society. Protecting non-smokers must be a higher priority.

Best Practice

The ‘tobacco and vapes bill’ from **Great Britain**, as well as **Milan** since 2025.

115. Promoting community-based care for people with disabilities

Outpatient care in one’s own home is preferred over special residential facilities. Measures include the introduction of a comprehensive system to support people with disabilities in their own homes, regardless of the level of care, and peer support through the development of networks where people with disabilities help each other cope with everyday life.

116. Accessible psychotherapeutic support

Volt advocates for the expansion of easily accessible psychosocial support services in Vienna, with a focus on children, young people, and families. This should include more psychotherapy coverage through insurance funds, increased crisis intervention centers, and more counseling services. Additionally, investments in preventive measures, such as early support for children and young families, must be prioritized.

The report “Psychosocial Health in Vienna 2023” highlights the continued decline in the mental health of the Viennese population. Young people under 29 and women providing care are especially affected. Studies show that 80% of mental health disorders emerge during childhood and adolescence. Early intervention through services like parenting advice, family support, or psychological care can significantly reduce the risk of chronic conditions.

To address acute stress and prevent long-term consequences, existing support

services need expansion. This includes more health insurance-approved psychotherapists to shorten wait times, crisis intervention centers offering quick support during mental health crises, and low-barrier counseling centers that are easily accessible. Furthermore, retrospective measures should be considered to alleviate the long-term effects of pandemic-related stress.

Mental illness not only causes personal suffering but also results in significant economic costs due to sick leave and lost productivity. Preventive measures and early intervention have proven to be the most effective ways to reduce these long-term burdens. The increasing cases of burnout, anxiety, and depression—especially among young people—highlight the urgent need for action.

Best Practice

Denmark provides a strong example: psychotherapeutic treatment for children and young people, as well as for specific groups such as those in acute crises or suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders, is fully funded through tax revenue. This accessible service offers prompt support and, in the long run, eases the burden on the healthcare system.

117. Mental health prevention at work

Training and workshops in educational institutions and companies are designed to destigmatize mental illness and promote prevention. Targeted initiatives, such as coaching and supervision, should be offered to occupational groups at high risk of stress, including educational specialists and nursing staff.

Mental illnesses such as burnout and depression are particularly prevalent among occupational groups with high workloads and an imbalance between effort and recognition (effort-reward

imbalance). Educational specialists and nursing staff are disproportionately affected by this issue. Therefore, the VLT calls for the introduction of regular training and workshops in educational institutions and companies to raise awareness of mental health, reduce stigma, and prevent illness.

Additionally, targeted programs like coaching, supervision, or mindfulness training should be offered to enhance the resilience of employees in stressed occupational groups. These measures can help reduce long-term exhaustion, improve job satisfaction, and make system-critical occupations more attractive.

Studies show that occupational groups like teachers and nursing staff often experience symptoms of exhaustion and have an increased risk of depression. When job satisfaction declines, not only does the mental health of those affected worsen, but their effectiveness at work also decreases. In the long term, preventive measures such as coaching or self-care workshops can help reduce frequent sick leave, prevent chronic illnesses, and address the shortage of skilled workers in these professions.

Best Practice

The **Freiburg Model** in **Baden-Württemberg** offers teacher coaching groups, which have been shown to enhance job satisfaction and strengthen teachers' resilience. These initiatives help reduce symptoms of exhaustion and the risk of burnout – an approach that can also be applied to other high-stress occupations.

118. Early prevention and promoting resilience for families and young people

Expansion of Support Services for Young Families, Single Parents, Children, and Young People in Day-Care Centers, Schools, and Training Organizations: Ensuring adequate midwife care, enhancing social work in kindergartens, and introducing multi-professional teams in schools that include school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses. Additionally, implementing mentoring programs and individualized case management for young people at an increased risk of dropping out of training.

Early prevention strengthens young people’s resilience, helping them better cope with stressors. Targeted support can reduce developmental delays, psychosocial stress, and dropout rates, contributing to long-term social stability and equal opportunities. Expanding such services is particularly crucial in socially disadvantaged areas to address inequalities.

Best Practice

The Pathfinder programme in **Glasgow** shows how targeted measures can create prospects for young people at risk. It combines practical work experience with individual mentoring to develop vocational skills, self-confidence and social skills.

119. Low-threshold healthcare

Medical care centers, which can be visited without appointments and without the need for an e-card, would ensure that homeless people have access to quality healthcare. Multi-professional teams would provide integrative medical care, psychological support, and social work assistance. Mobile medical teams would also be deployed to deliver care directly

to individuals, especially at night and in remote areas.

In Austria, nearly 20,000 people are registered as homeless, with almost 60% of them living in Vienna. Homeless individuals are particularly vulnerable to health risks. A 2023 study by the Medical University of Vienna reveals that they are twice as likely to develop cancer as people with a permanent address. Research indicates that homeless individuals are more prone to serious illnesses like cancer and often struggle with mental health and addiction disorders. Despite existing services, gaps in care remain, especially for hard-to-reach groups and at night.

Best Practice

In **London**, there are health centres dedicated solely to homeless individuals. These centres provide flexible ‘drop-in’ services that do not require appointments. They combine primary care with psychosocial support and collaborate closely with alcohol, drug, and mental health services. Additionally, the NHS’s ‘Find & Treat’ programme offers specially equipped buses that deliver care to homeless individuals on the streets or in shelters. Close coordination with local health services ensures that follow-up care is provided.

120. Help not punishment: for a progressive drugs policy

Volt advocates for a drug policy modeled on Portugal’s approach, which focuses on providing help rather than marginalizing or incarcerating individuals. Addiction is not prevented through criminal prosecution. It is more effective to concentrate on prevention and offer holistic support to those affected. This includes expanding the support infrastructure, such as funding substitution therapies and pharmacies. Volt also supports facilities where

doctors, psychologists, and social workers collaborate.

We therefore support:

Harm Reduction: The introduction of measures such as safe consumption rooms, the provision of clean syringes, and the controlled distribution of substitution medications to minimize health risks.

Decriminalisation: Reducing criminal pressure on consumers by decriminalizing the possession of small quantities for personal use. Instead of criminal penalties, those affected are referred to commissions consisting of doctors, psychologists, and social workers.

Prevention and Education: Expanding programs to prevent addiction, particularly for young people, to educate them early on about the risks of drug use.

Treatment and Social Integration: Funding substitution therapies, pharmacies, and facilities where multidisciplinary teams work together. Additionally, providing low-threshold psychosocial support and programs for reintegration into society.

Criminal prosecution has proven ineffective in addressing addiction. In contrast, the Portuguese model demonstrates that prevention, therapy, and social support yield better results. In Austria, there are existing approaches like substitution programs and the distribution of sterile syringes in pharmacies. These should be expanded to further reduce health risks, such as HIV infections and drug-related deaths. Decriminalization would also alleviate the burden on police and the judiciary, freeing up resources to combat organized drug trafficking.

Best Practice

In **Portugal**, since 2001, people caught with more than one gram of heroin or 25 grams of cannabis have had the drugs seized and been required to appear before a commission of lawyers, doctors, and psychologists within three days. A recommendation for clinical withdrawal in the event of documented addiction is voluntary, but the person concerned must not be caught with drugs again for a period of six months, or community service or a driving license suspension will follow. Drug-related deaths and usage have significantly decreased, and HIV infections due to injecting drug use have fallen by about 90%. The focus on therapy rather than punishment has helped to better reintegrate drug addicts into society. Decriminalisation has relieved the courts and significantly reduced costs such as healthcare expenses.

Decriminalisation of possession of small amounts of cannabis

Since legalization is currently blocked at the federal level in Austria, Vienna should work towards the greatest possible decriminalization of possession of small amounts of cannabis for personal use. The City of Vienna should work at the federal level to ensure that possession of up to 15 grams of cannabis is no longer prosecuted, but at most punished as an administrative offence. The criminalisation of users wastes police and judicial resources. Decriminalisation would relieve this burden.

Model projects for controlled cultivation and distribution

Since nationwide legalisation is difficult, Vienna should implement and support model projects for the controlled cultivation and distribution of cannabis in licensed shops. These projects could be scientifically monitored and provide data to examine the effects of legal cannabis policies in Austria. Experience from other

countries shows that controlled distribution can reduce the black market and improve the protection of minors.

Increased education, protection of minors, and prevention

Vienna should focus more on educating the public and preventing the risks of cannabis use, especially among young people. Through age-appropriate education in schools and youth centres, young people can be sensitised to the responsible use of cannabis. In the case of model projects, the sale of cannabis to minors must be strictly prohibited and punishable by heavy penalties. The protection of children and young people should be of the highest priority.

Regulation and tax revenues

Vienna should advocate that possible tax revenues from a legal cannabis industry be earmarked for addiction prevention, therapy services, and research. The revenues should be invested in measures that promote the health of the population and minimize the negative consequences of consumption. Within the framework of model projects, it must be ensured that cannabis products are subject to strict quality controls. By controlling the cultivation and processing, contaminants and harmful ingredients can be avoided. The City of Vienna should support initiatives and projects that advocate a rational drug policy and focus on education, prevention, and harm reduction. Vienna should seek dialogue with the population about the pros and cons of a changed cannabis policy and initiate a broad social debate.

121. Protection against violence for persons with disabilities – goal for 2030

Vienna should establish a comprehensive protection system by 2030 that

specifically aims to prevent violence against people with disabilities, particularly women. By offering specialized services, ensuring barrier-free access, and implementing structural prevention measures, Vienna can take a pioneering role in protecting against violence.

122. Violence protection network for people with disabilities

A comprehensive violence protection network for persons with disabilities should be established in Vienna to ensure prevention, protection, and support.

Studies show that persons with disabilities are significantly more likely to experience violence than the general population. Four out of ten people have experienced severe physical violence, and more than eight out of ten have faced psychological violence. Those in need of care, as well as individuals in assisted-living facilities, are particularly at risk, with women also being highly vulnerable.

Vienna should therefore:

- Establish specialized counselling services that are accessible both physically and digitally, and cater to different languages.
- Provide training for staff in institutions to help prevent violence and enable the early identification of assaults.
- Create mobile violence protection teams to offer immediate support to victims on-site.

Best Practice

In **Germany**, there are specialised counselling centres such as ‘Weibernetz’ that focus on women with disabilities, as well as training programmes to prevent structural violence in institutions.

123. Barrier-free access to general protection against violence

All existing services offering protection against violence in Vienna (e.g., women’s shelters, emergency hotlines) must be fully accessible. Women with disabilities experience more complex and frequent forms of violence compared to women without disabilities. However, many services intended to protect against violence are not accessible (e.g., limited physical accessibility or a lack of sign language interpreters).

Volt is committed to:

- Designing women’s shelters to be fully accessible, including wheelchair ramps and communication aids (e.g., sign language, plain language).
- Expanding the 24-hour women’s emergency call center of the City of Vienna to include accessible communication channels (e.g., video chats in sign language).
- Launching awareness campaigns to highlight the specific needs of women with disabilities.

Best Practice

In **Canada**, special emergency services have been set up for deaf women that can be reached via video chat in sign language.

124. Specific support for women with disabilities in the event of sexual violence

Targeted support services must be created for women with disabilities who have experienced sexual violence. Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, with half of them having experienced sexual

harassment or more severe forms of it. At the same time, there is a significant lack of specific support services.

Volt is committed to:

- Expanding therapy services tailored to the unique needs of women with disabilities, such as trauma therapy.
- Creating specialized, accessible points of contact staffed by trained personnel.
- Launching awareness campaigns to highlight the elevated risk of sexual violence against women with disabilities.

Best Practice

In **Australia**, there are specialised centres such as 1800RESPECT that focus on sexual violence against women with disabilities and provide comprehensive support.

125. Prevention of violence in care facilities

Structural violence in care facilities must be eradicated through mandatory preventive measures. People with disabilities in these facilities are particularly vulnerable to such violence, which can manifest in behaviors such as inappropriate roughness from care staff or abuse of power by employees.

Volt is committed to:

- Establishing independent monitoring bodies to regularly inspect facilities and document instances of abuse.
- Introducing mandatory training programs for care workers to raise awareness about how to interact respectfully with people with disabilities.

- Creating anonymous complaint centers where affected individuals or their families can report instances of abuse.

Best Practice

In **Sweden**, there are independent ombudspersons for people with disabilities who can investigate complaints and take action.

126. Consistent implementation of the Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention obliges Austria to implement comprehensive measures to prevent and combat violence against women and to protect victims. However, significant gaps remain, particularly in the coordination between the federal and state governments and in the provision of adequate protection and support services. A nationwide action plan is required to better coordinate and implement prevention efforts, victim protection, and criminal prosecution. These measures are crucial to reduce the alarmingly high number of femicides in Austria and to uphold the human rights of women.

127. Expansion of women's shelters and protective accommodation

Women's shelters provide critical refuge for women affected by violence. The number of available spaces must urgently increase to meet the growing demand. Additionally, all shelters should be accessible free of charge to eliminate financial barriers for those affected. Expanding these facilities is essential to ensure safety and support for women in dangerous situations.

128. Comprehensive medical emergency service for victims of violence

Rape must be treated as a medical emergency, with anonymous emergency services for both violence and forensic evidence collection available 24/7 in all regions. Standardized regulations for anonymous evidence collection and free access to medication are necessary to ensure timely assistance and legal security for those affected. These measures strengthen victims' trust in the support system and facilitate criminal prosecution.

129. Protection against gender-based violence in the digital space

Digital violence, including cyber-harassment, revenge porn, and the unsolicited sending of pornographic content, must be rigorously prosecuted. The legal framework should be expanded to include new forms of digital harassment, making them punishable offenses. Only clear laws, coupled with strict enforcement, can ensure safety in the digital space.

130. Prevention measures with a focus on education and offenders

Educational programs on consent and violence prevention should be mandatory starting in the sixth grade. At the same time, perpetrators must receive more attention: they should participate in courses on non-violent communication and take responsibility for their actions. Prevention is key to reducing gender-based violence in the long term and sustainably changing social structures.

131. Wide-ranging awareness campaigns to prevent violence

Regular campaigns should provide information about support services, raise awareness of consent, and challenge social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence. These campaigns help break taboos and promote a culture of respect and equality.

132. Safety on the roads

We want everyone in Vienna to feel safe and secure. That's why we are improving road safety by extending traffic light phases and widening pavements. We are also increasing the presence of street workers to address drug and alcohol issues. In close cooperation with the police and other organizations, we are creating an environment where everyone can feel comfortable and safe.

In addition to the increased presence of police and security services in designated problem areas, we will focus on preventive measures. This includes promoting neighborhood initiatives that strengthen community bonds and provide a point of contact for residents' concerns.

We will also improve lighting in parks, public squares, and dark alleys to reduce fear and enhance safety. Our commitment includes using environmentally friendly LED lighting, which not only provides warm light that benefits both insects and people, but is also powered by solar panels to save energy and protect the environment.

133. Closing the gender health gap

The city of Vienna should invest in gender-sensitive healthcare research and require gender-specific data in clinical studies. This is essential to better address the distinct needs of women*, men*, and

marginalized groups in prevention, diagnosis, and therapy. Expanding gender-specific research improves medical care for everyone and reduces health inequalities in the long term.

134. Regular training in gender medicine for medical personnel

Doctors, nurses, and therapists should undergo mandatory training on gender-specific differences in medical conditions, symptoms, and treatment approaches. This training enhances their ability to effectively care for FLINTA individuals (women, lesbians, intersex, non-binary, trans, and agender) and fosters a discrimination-free healthcare environment.

135. Integration of gender studies in schools and training programmes

Educational initiatives on FLINTA issues and gender-specific content should be an integral part of school and university curricula. Specifically, medical degree programs must include training on gender-sensitive communication and diagnostics to prepare future professionals for the needs of all genders.

136. Preventive health care for women

Vienna already offers a wide range of preventive care options, such as the national breast cancer early detection program and annual gynecological check-ups. However, many of these services are not universally free or easily accessible. In particular, additional services such as vaginal ultrasounds or comprehensive hormone screenings are often not covered by health insurance, even though they are crucial for the early detection of many diseases.

To promote equal health opportunities, all women* in Vienna – regardless of age or social status – should have access to free preventive examinations. This includes expanding the existing services to cover annual hormone screenings and additional free services, such as ultrasound examinations. These measures would help identify health risks at an early stage and improve women's* quality of life in a sustainable manner.

137. Gender-sensitive criteria for digital health applications

All digital health and care applications approved in Vienna must meet binding criteria for gender equality. This ensures that new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, do not perpetuate gender-based discrimination but instead promote equal opportunities in healthcare.

138. Physical autonomy and reproductive rights

The City of Vienna should continue to enhance access to reproductive rights and medical services to ensure the self-determination of all individuals. This includes legalizing non-commercial surrogacy agreements and egg donation within a clear ethical framework. These measures create equitable opportunities for individuals who wish to have children, regardless of their life circumstances or sexual orientation.

139. Barrier-free access to abortions

Abortions should be fully decriminalized and recognized as a medical service up to the 18th week of pregnancy.

In Austria, abortion is not punishable under a time limit regulation, but it remains fundamentally enshrined in the penal code (Sections 96 and 97 of the

Austrian Penal Code) and is only permitted under 'exceptions.'

Currently, the costs of an abortion in Austria must be borne by the individual, unless there is a medical indication. This differentiates Austria from many other Western European countries, where the costs are covered by health insurance. We therefore demand that the costs be covered unconditionally by health insurance, and that mandatory counselling or reflection periods be eliminated. However, voluntary counselling services will remain available to meet individual needs. These measures would strengthen women's autonomy and guarantee access to safe medical care.

This demand requires a fundamental reform of Austrian criminal law. It would not only eliminate legal stigma but also make access to safe and affordable abortions easier.

140. Education and information programmes to promote bodily autonomy

Educational programs on sexuality, bodily autonomy, and reproductive rights should be expanded through collaboration with schools, civil society organizations, and medical institutions. These programs must also include topics related to being proactive about safety, rather than being sorry, in order to promote inclusivity and reduce prejudice. Modern sexuality education enhances awareness of self-determination and health rights in all areas of life.

141. Securing access to sterilisation

Sterilization should be accessible to all individuals who choose it, without unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles. Clear legal regulations guarantee freedom of

choice while also protecting against discrimination and unjustified restrictions. This measure respects the

right to bodily autonomy and strengthens each individual's freedom of choice.

VI. Protect wildlife

Current problems

Compared to many other countries, Austria's animal welfare standards are exemplary. However, this does not mean that we can afford to be complacent or focus only on shortcomings elsewhere. Excellence is maintained through continuous improvement, and this applies to animal welfare as well.

One area in need of improvement is the treatment of Fiaker horses in the city. Regardless of the impact on the animals, we question the necessity of this tradition and believe that it is time to embrace modern alternatives.

Vienna could also enhance its approach to nutrition within its jurisdiction. The WHO's dietary recommendations include a reduction in saturated fat consumption, which is primarily found in meat and other animal products. Nevertheless, almost all canteens and dining facilities offer meat as a main course every day. While vegetarian alternatives are often available, vegan options remain rare.

And although some animals become beloved members of our households, animal welfare must be given more consideration in pet breeding as well. Dogs in particular, but also many other pets, are often bred for sale under conditions that can be harmful to their health. The best example is French bulldogs, which have been bred for shorter snouts, severely restricting their breathing and often leading to chronic health issues, lengthy operations, or even premature death.

Our vision

Every living creature should have the right to a life lived under the best possible conditions. This applies equally to animals in agriculture, zoos, and our homes.

Vienna should play a pioneering role in Europe and the world when it comes to animal welfare. Animal farming is one of the biggest drivers of climate change due to its high consumption of resources and land. In addition, as rational beings, it is our responsibility to care for those who have no voice of their own.

We at Volt Wien strive to be that voice through the following measures!

142. Protection and abolition of hackney carriages in the city

Our Fiaker horses work hard all year round. While there is a heat-related leave policy for temperatures above 35°C, it is insufficient. We do not want to see images of Fiaker horses standing in the rain in Vienna's city center during the flood of the century in September 2024, even amid the storm.

As an immediate measure, we demand that Fiaker horses in Vienna be given a break from work at 28°C and during extreme weather events, similar to those of September 2024.

Abolition of Fiaker horses in Vienna by 2027

In the long term, we believe that the tradition of horse-drawn carriages is outdated and no longer aligns with the values of the 21st century. The horse excrement dirties the streets, and the route from the stables to the city center and back creates a traffic obstruction. Despite using blinkers, traffic still represents a stressful situation for the horses.

Subsidizing the transition to electric cabs or other environmentally friendly alternatives

We demand a shift from conventional horse-drawn cabs to electric-powered carriages, following the Aaglander model. These would not only provide a more animal- and environmentally friendly alternative, but also allow the tradition to continue in a modern, stylish way.

143. Promotion of vegan nutrition

Flexitarian, vegetarian, and vegan diets and lifestyles are becoming increasingly prevalent in society. In Austria, around 5% of the population identify as vegan, meaning they follow a lifestyle that avoids animal products in all areas as much as possible to reduce animal suffering. This has positive effects on animals, the environment, the climate, and health.

We view this as a crucial contribution to climate protection and improving our standard of living. We demand national information campaigns on plant-based nutrition based on the latest scientific findings, targeting schools, restaurants, and public canteens.

Additionally, an alternative vegan menu should be offered in all public institutions. This would not only make a plant-based diet more attractive but also ensure that no one is excluded based on their dietary beliefs, as required by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This would not restrict those who consume a conventional diet but would instead expand the range of options available.

Animal products should increasingly come from companies with high animal welfare standards, preferably from regional suppliers. Incentives for the catering industry can increase the availability of plant-based alternatives. To this end, the 'Natürlich gut Essen' (Naturally Good Food) award from Oeko-Business Wien should include a mandatory proportion of vegan products, with co-financing available to support caterers. Furthermore, the labelling of animal products should become more transparent.

144. Controlling the pet animal trade

Adopting dogs, cats, and other pets online often carries significant risks. The reputability of many providers is questionable, and such platforms are frequently exploited for fraud. Even the legal requirement to sell dogs and cats online only with permission does not offer adequate protection.

Therefore, **the online trade of pets should be banned**, and stricter controls should be implemented in Vienna.

The sale of animals exhibiting signs of abuse is rightfully illegal. However, this ban can be bypassed through crossbreeding. Moreover, this issue is not limited to dog breeds; it extends to cats, rodents, reptiles, and other common pet species. We aim to strengthen regulations and enhance education to better inform the public about the health risks posed to animals, thereby reducing the demand for such breeds.

Additionally, it should no longer be permitted to use breeds bred for abuse in advertising.

145. Expansion of wildlife care in Vienna

Vienna has numerous green spaces, often deliberately left in their natural state, which allows wild animals such as foxes, badgers, and even deer to coexist with us in this beautiful city. However, where nature and the city meet, accidents can happen or conflicts may arise.

That is why we are calling for increased funding for the municipal wildlife service to care for injured or distressed wild animals and provide advice on wildlife sightings. Additionally, we seek financial

support to alleviate the burden on private associations. A holistic, municipal solution strengthens animal welfare and reduces the strain on private helpers.

We demand the abolition of neon signs within the city center to reduce light pollution and thus support the urgently needed protection of insects. Light pollution has a serious impact on the biorhythms of insects, drastically reducing their survival rate. Street lighting should also be designed in an insect-friendly manner, both in form and composition. We are currently witnessing a global extinction of species at a rate 10 to 100 times faster than the average extinction rate over the last ten million years.

146. Education offensive on animal welfare

Introduction of animal welfare education in schools and awareness-raising campaigns for responsible animal husbandry. Introducing education on animal welfare at an early stage strengthens awareness of the respectful treatment of animals and fosters a long-term culture of compassion towards animals. The programs will begin in the 2025/26 academic year.

VII. Renew education

Current problems

Vienna's kindergartens, day-care centres, primary, and secondary schools are under immense pressure: there is a shortage of hundreds of qualified professionals, groups and classes are overcrowded, and the expansion of infrastructure is lagging behind the city's rapidly growing and increasingly diverse population.

The demographic change driven by migration adds further strain to the education system. In many Viennese schools, a large number of children do not speak German as their first language, yet there is a severe lack of language support necessary for their academic success.

Without targeted support, social inequalities will worsen, and educational opportunities will be wasted. This also applies to children from low-income and educationally disadvantaged families, who are denied equal opportunities since the level of education in Vienna remains heavily dependent on social background.

At the same time, many aspects of the education system are still rooted in the 19th century: pressure to perform, rigid school structures, and an outdated assessment system diminish motivation and learning success.

UNESCO recommends four pillars of modern education:

- Learning how to acquire knowledge
- Learning to live together
- Learning to act
- Learning to be

However, these principles are only partially implemented in Austria. As a result, we are missing out on the opportunity to prepare children effectively for a diverse and dynamic future while fostering the potential of each individual. This deficiency will have long-term consequences for society as a whole.

Both integration and inclusion remain difficult to achieve in the current school system, as it is still largely based on outdated structures.

Schools should be places where critical thinking, participation, social responsibility, and cooperation are actively promoted. However, this potential often remains untapped in Vienna – partly due to, but not limited to, the acute shortage of staff and the resulting excessive workloads.

Our vision

Volt is committed to a bright and meaningful future for all children and young people in Vienna. Volt sees education as the key to social cohesion, equal opportunities, and active democracy – in Europe, Austria, and especially in Vienna. Education must enable everyone to actively participate in society and contribute to shaping the future. It plays a central role in overcoming major challenges such as social inequality, the changing world of work, the climate crisis, and the need to strengthen democracy and peace.

One of the biggest challenges is to reduce the influence of social background on educational success and support individual learning pathways. The Viennese education system must become fairer, more modern, and more accessible so that all children and young people can develop their potential. Volt is rethinking education – making it more practical, evidence-based, equitable, and inclusive. We are committed to a comprehensive reform of the education sector to ensure modern, multidisciplinary, and practice-oriented support through targeted investments.

Volt envisions a modern, flexible education system that gives all children the opportunity to develop their full potential. Project-based and cross-curricular learning should be promoted as a central component of the curriculum to strengthen not only cognitive but also social and emotional skills.

Our goal: to empower students to become responsible, engaged citizens who actively tackle the challenges of our time and shape the future of Vienna.

147. Better Education Through More Personnel

We demand a significant increase in the number of skilled workers through better working conditions, higher salaries, and targeted training and career-change programs. Every child in Vienna deserves a first-class education with individual support – to achieve this, we need more dedicated teachers now!

Vienna's schools, kindergartens, and after-school care centers are under immense pressure due to a lack of sufficient teaching and care staff. While the city is already making great efforts, these efforts must be significantly intensified. Overworked teachers and excessively large classes jeopardize the quality of education and equal opportunities. Without more well-trained staff, all further reforms will be ineffective.

148. Individual learning paths: strength-oriented support for every child

The rigid curricula and performance assessments currently in use must be replaced by personalized learning pathways. Every student should be supported according to their strengths and needs. Instead of always viewing children solely in terms of their deficits (what can't they do?), we should encourage their individual talents and strengths. The resulting enthusiasm and motivation for learning will then also help address the respective weaknesses and foster progress in those areas as well. Children should learn in a hands-on, project-based, and interdisciplinary manner, and above all, they should be taught to acquire and develop knowledge independently. Learning guides can then respond to children individually – by

meeting each child where they are, boredom or excessive demands are avoided, and only in this way can real integration and inclusion occur. The adaptation of curricula could be done gradually.

149. Learning across age groups instead of age-based classes

We are committed to fostering cross-age learning, where children can learn from one another and grow together. The outdated notion that all children of the same age must be taught the same material at the same time is fundamentally opposed to inclusion, integration, and individual development. This approach is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve in the current mainstream school system.

150. Teachers as learning guides

Volt calls for teachers to support students in both their personal and academic development over the long term, rather than merely advancing them from grade to grade. With continuous support and individualized assistance, teachers can more effectively address each child's specific needs and promote sustainable learning growth. A long-term teacher-student relationship fosters trust, supports social and emotional development, and helps students identify and nurture their strengths – instead of leaving them behind in a rigid, annual progression system.

151. Holistic performance recording: From grades to individual learning processes

Volt advocates for the introduction of a holistic approach to performance evaluation, one that moves away from numerical grades. Instead, it should incorporate various assessment methods, such as portfolios, learning diaries, and presentations. Children and young people should be actively involved in defining their learning goals, fostering self-reflection and taking responsibility for their development. However, this does not necessarily include performance assessments, which can often demotivate self-directed learning. The role of the learning companion is to identify and nurture the unique potential in each student.

Rather than extinguishing children's natural curiosity at an early age with coercion, grades, pressure, and competition, we should encourage their intrinsic desire for knowledge. Instead of relying on extrinsic motivation (such as grades), intrinsic motivation should take center stage. When students are genuinely curious about a subject, they acquire knowledge more quickly and retain it in long-term memory. The focus should be on the process of acquiring knowledge, rather than the finished result.

153. Effective education: shorter, more focussed teaching periods

Quality over quantity: There is little value in children sitting through six or more hours of lessons if they spend two of those hours bored and daydreaming, absorbing nothing, and then forgetting two more hours shortly afterward.

Instead, education should be focused on promoting independent and sustainable knowledge acquisition. In the era of AI and digitalization, we must stop blindly cramming information into our children and shift our focus to the skills that distinguish us from computers: creativity, cooperation, critical thinking, personal responsibility, and responsibility for our environment.

In addition to optimized learning time, students should be given extended, well-supervised free time where they can develop independently and follow their own interests in fields like science, sports, art, and more. This self-directed learning not only strengthens intrinsic motivation but also leads to a significantly more sustainable acquisition of knowledge. Children and young people can discover and cultivate their own strengths, enriching their overall educational experience and anchoring it for the long term.

153. School as a place to live

At the same time, schools should be less focused on simply teaching academic knowledge and more on being places where life truly unfolds — a school community that lives up to its name. Relationships and social skills should take precedence, while authority and the “law of the jungle” have no place. Instead, community, relationships, and democracy should be at the heart of the school experience. Children should be given more responsibility for their school, from school parliaments to practical tasks like cooking and cleaning. The more time children spend at school, the more they naturally need qualified supervisors who do more than just “watch over” them.

A school of the future like this will provide all children, young people, and adults with equal and non-discriminatory access to high-quality education, regardless of their social background or language skills. Above all, this requires the courage and commitment to make fundamental changes and to provide stronger support for teachers in their multi-professional environment.

Volt advocates for an education system that promotes equal opportunities while simultaneously fostering social participation. A school in which every child is supported according to their individual needs, and in which everyone — regardless of their background — can learn together.

Best Practice

Instead of dividing children into different school types early on after primary school, **Switzerland**, for example, believes in joint learning within a single school type. In this system, differentiation is not achieved by sending children to separate schools, but by creating ability-based groups within individual subjects or across the curriculum, depending on the canton. This structure can take the form of separate courses or joint teaching with individually adapted learning levels.

It is only at the beginning of upper secondary school (from year 10 onwards) that there is greater specialisation: students either choose a vocationally oriented education or an academic pathway. This permeable system allows for a longer period of shared education and promotes both equal opportunities and social cohesion. The positive effects are reflected in international comparative studies – Switzerland regularly ranks among the top performers in performance tests such as PISA.

Best Practice

The **Integrative Lernwerkstatt Brigittenau** (ILB) is a public all-day school operated by the City of Vienna for children and young people aged 6 to 15. It is known for its reform-pedagogical and inclusive teaching approach, which includes the following special features:

Multi-level classes: The ILB organizes lessons in multi-level classrooms, where students of different ages learn together.

Project-based learning: The school offers project-based learning opportunities that foster both individual and collaborative work.

Alternative assessment: Until the 7th grade, the ILB uses alternative performance descriptions instead of traditional report cards. However, since the 2020/21 school year, this form of assessment has only been provided as an additional option for first-year students.

Nature experiences and craft projects: A highlight is the 'Learning under the stars' project in the Stockerauer Au, which combines nature experiences with craft activities. There is also the mobile outdoor group MOGLLI, which promotes outdoor learning.

These features make the ILB a unique educational institution (unfortunately, still the only one of its kind) that prioritizes individualized learning and inclusion. It was awarded the Austrian School Award.

154. Diversity-conscious and discrimination-critical education at all levels

Staff development in Vienna ensures that all educational professionals, including teachers, school social workers, and other support staff, receive mandatory training to raise awareness of issues such as discrimination, racism, and inclusive learning. Anti-discrimination and critical approaches to racism should be integrated into teacher training, establishing these crucial topics as essential professional skills for all educators. This approach guarantees that educational spaces are genuinely open and equitable for all children, regardless of their origin, gender, or background.

155. View change as opportunity

Vienna should better harness the potential offered by migrants and asylum seekers, especially those who have already worked as teachers in their home countries. It is crucial to provide these individuals with the opportunity to contribute their valuable experience and expertise to Viennese schools. By facilitating access to teaching professions, we not only build bridges between different cultures, but also foster a diverse and inclusive educational environment. This strengthens equal opportunities and ensures that all children, regardless of their background, benefit from a broad and varied education.

156. Clear rules instead of distractions: mobile phone ban at schools & basic digital education

The private use of mobile phones during class is detrimental to learning, as it disrupts students' concentration and ability to focus. Unfortunately, politicians are avoiding their responsibility by passing the decision on to schools. Over 70% of teachers, according to a survey by the Austrian Association of Teachers, support a general ban on mobile phones in schools. A clear and binding regulation to limit mobile phone use must be established – and it must come from the political sphere. It is their responsibility to set the framework and ensure that schools do not have to face this challenge alone, especially when dealing with parents and students during changes to house rules, all in the name of school autonomy (which is often cited when the issue becomes uncomfortable).

At the same time, teachers need much more training in media education. How should they handle new media, uncontrolled access to the internet, and social media responsibly? What qualifies as a reliable source? Even if smartphones are not used during lessons, they remain an integral part of children's and young people's lives. This fundamental digital education, which is crucial for the democratic process in society, should also include binding rules for school groups, class chats, and platforms like WhatsApp or other services.

Best Practice

Franklin Street Grammar School, located in the 21st district, implemented a strict mobile phone ban about a year ago. In the lower school, students' mobile

phones are locked in boxes before lessons begin. As a result, students engage more with one another and make better use of their breaks.

157. Combating bullying and violence against school and university students

We want to introduce a comprehensive anti-bullying program in Viennese schools. Bullying and violence against pupils and students must be identified early and consistently prevented, as they often have long-term psychological effects. In many cases, there is a primary bully who attacks verbally or physically, while others remain silent or join in out of fear of exclusion. Often, bullies themselves face personal challenges, such as previous experiences of domestic violence, systemic discrimination, or exposure to a violent environment.

For particularly vulnerable groups, such as trans* youth, safe spaces and dedicated support services are especially important, as bullying and violence—both at school and in public spaces—are major concerns for queer young people, particularly those who do not conform to gender norms.

To effectively combat bullying, we advocate for:

- Expanding access to psychological counselling with local experts,
- Enhancing education on digital media use to prevent cyberbullying,
- Providing targeted training for psychologists and educators to identify and resolve conflicts at an early stage.

Regular training sessions for teachers and school staff will be implemented to ensure early detection and intervention, and anti-bullying content will be integrated into school curricula at all

levels. Additionally, we propose the establishment of an accessible and anonymous whistleblower system for reporting bullying cases. Parents will be actively involved through anti-bullying initiatives and dedicated workshops.

Violence and bullying are widespread and growing issues in Viennese schools. However, LGBTIQ youth are particularly affected by discrimination and harassment: approximately 50% of LGBTIQ youth aged 15 to 17 in Austria have experienced bullying at school, and more than 20% conceal their identity at school out of fear of discrimination.

158. Inclusion of children with disabilities

Inclusion in schools is a crucial step toward ensuring equal opportunities and meeting the requirements of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A barrier-free school environment and needs-based services enable all children and young people to fully participate in school life. That is why Volt is committed to this vision:

Barrier-free schools: Existing schools must be designed to be accessible for all students and teachers. Future school buildings will be modernized and constructed to meet the needs of children and young people. Particular attention will be given to adaptations for students with disabilities and neurodivergent conditions.

Multiprofessional teams for inclusion: Teams of inclusion specialists will provide tailored support for children and young people with disabilities. The level of support will be adjusted to individual needs.

Special schools as a temporary solution: Special schools will continue to operate in close cooperation with mainstream

schools until the goal of ‘one school for all’ is fully realized.

159. Lifelong education

Customized further training for people with disabilities is supported through tailored training programs and wage subsidies.

160. Uniform and consistent structural accessibility

All public and private buildings accessible to the public (such as bank branches, pharmacies, post offices, and hairdressers), as well as means of transport and public spaces in Vienna, must be fully accessible—without exception. While Vienna currently has legal provisions for accessibility (e.g., § 115 of the Viennese Building Code), these regulations are not consistently enforced. Historic buildings, cobblestone streets in the city center, and inadequately secured construction sites remain significant obstacles.

Volt therefore advocates:

- Introducing uniform standards for all construction projects, including historic buildings
- Mandating retrofitting for existing public buildings and spaces
- Establishing a central monitoring body to ensure compliance with accessibility standards

Best Practice

Luxembourg has implemented uniform accessibility standards for new buildings and renovations, characterized by clear specifications and consistent implementation.

Volt Österreich 2025

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