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Volt Belgium's political vision is the endpoint of an internal democratic process in Volt Belgium. In 2021, the Political Vision was developed through a combination of political vision task forces, surveys and member participation moments. In October 2021, Volt Belgium's general assembly officially approved this political vision.

Volt Belgium's political vision is the core element of our policy program and all our future election programs. It summarises the core of Volt Belgium's political vision on the 5+1 challenges designed by Volt Europa.

For any questions, don't hesitate to contact policy@voltbelgium.org

Pillar 1 - CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT

"Permanent and active citizen participation"

Today, politicians go from one mandate to the next, often lacking long term vision, which has led to increased tensions and alienation between citizens and the political institutions. Democratic participation shouldn't stop after elections. Volt believes that the Belgian state and its institutions must empower its citizens and ensure that its policies are citizen-centric while enabling citizens to make their voices heard. We are champions of digital citizen platforms using technology to embed deliberative democracy, shape and execute public policies whilst combatting the declining trust in our institutions. We encourage deliberative democracy (e.g. citizen assemblies) and are open to explore all fora of democracy that stimulate citizen participation. We encourage participatory budgeting, especially at the local level.

Pillar 2 - Smart State

A. General: "A transparent, efficient smart state serving citizens first"

We cannot afford to have a digital society supported by an analogue public administration. Achieving solutions to the challenges we face requires a more digitally enabled Smart State. By investing in digital infrastructures that facilitate innovation, speed up integration and interoperability of smart state tools across the EU, we seek to further enable public services that empower people, are tailored to their needs and expectations, and protect us all. Those infrastructures are developed in a secure way (respecting Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability). By improving the roll-out of digital approaches, we seek to improve the effectiveness of our services, transparency around decision-making and implementation, and direct participation of citizens in shaping the services that they use. We are champions of effective, proactive

and responsive authorities that focus on their citizens rather than navigating red tape.

B. Healthcare: "Good Health and a resilient healthcare system for healthier citizens"

Government decisions should be based on scientific and data-driven approaches. We are proponents of smart healthcare and the utilization of data-driven approaches, innovation, smart devices and scientific knowledge. We prioritize the reduction of avoidable social, environmental and lifestyle related burdens on our health. The economic losses resulting from pollution-related (air pollution, road traffic, industry, wood burning, etc.) and lifestyle-related (smoking, obesity, unhealthy food, etc.) health burdens in Belgium are gigantic. Around 15% and 40% of the disease burden (disease, hospitalisations and deaths) is explained by environmental (involuntary exposure!) and lifestyle-related factors. A strong contributor to health inequalities being poverty and limited access to education. Those health inequalities should be mitigated by improving living conditions.

C. Education: "Smart education to unlock a better future for us all"

Education is the foundation of a thriving (modern) society. We want people to be prepared to participate in an evolving European Union and world. Quality-learning is directly related to the formation of citizens. We want to empower and engage Belgians with emotional, financial and digital literacy. This makes them 'citizens' in the true meaning of the word, ready for the future. A key factor for social mobility and thus the reduction of inequalities is education. That's why we think it is crucial to invest in. We aim for sustainable lifelong learning. This requires a healthy environment for all in both body and mind. Learning should be joyful and interesting to be able to keep students and staff motivated, while at the same time excelling in education rankings. Affordable and accessible education should be a basic right. Strengthening learning-communities will foster tomorrow's leaders, entrepreneurs and workers.

Pillar 3 - SOCIAL EQUALITY

"Together towards social inclusivity for all"

We are the party of systemic inclusion. We aim for a society where no-one is left behind and where socio-economic inequalities are reduced. For us, politics should enable everyone to have a decent quality of life. We are defenders of human rights and do not tolerate any discrimination based on gender, race/origin and sexual orientation. We want to expand those rights and don't tolerate any rollback of those acquired universal rights. We seek to advocate and advance social policy and achieve this by genuinely listening to and empowering those who are disadvantaged by recognizing injustice better, connecting better with disadvantaged groups and developing solutions to empower the disadvantaged to be their own agents of change.

Pillar 4 - ECONOMIC RENAISSANCE

A. "An economy loved by entrepreneurs, employees and our planet"

The economic champions of the world will be the countries that master the digital and ecological transition. Companies and their employees are important stakeholders in achieving those goals and a better future. We will foster an entrepreneurial culture that celebrates entrepreneurship. We want Belgium to enable its businesses to quickly become digital frontrunners, and to embrace the ecological transition. We will promote entrepreneurship and innovation through investment whilst cutting the red tape that has prevented these businesses from emerging in Belgium. We support substantial investment in the improvement of digital, green and hard infrastructure to enable inclusive and sustainable economic growth that works for all people. Citizens are the beating

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heart of our economy. We want a sustainable, resilient economy. Therefore, we propose the development of an industrial policy at the European Union (EU) level that is prepared to deal with unexpected situations from financial crises to pandemics. We support the EU building a diversified economy with strategic autonomy while still being embedded in the global economy. As Volt, we stand for a level playing field in Europe's internal competition. We strongly oppose tax evasion and will close loopholes in the regulations to sharply curtail the extreme tax avoidance by corporations and individuals through European harmonisation of fiscal policy and effective multilateralism.

Pillar 5 - GLOBAL BALANCE

A. General: "Towards a more fair, equitable and ecological world"

The future of humanity is in a critical state. From climate change to migration, from health to digital transformation, the challenges we face are immense. We need European solutions for most of those challenges. Belgium's contribution should be state-of-the art in regard to data-driven solutions and science-based investments and guide the EU towards a more equitable future. The transition to a sustainable economy and society is essential and is also a tool to reduce inequalities; we must take urgent and radical steps to reduce our carbon footprint and safeguard the future of our ecosystem for the generations to come. From mobility to air quality, from energy to waste management, from agriculture to food security, these challenges are societal and require each and every one of us to contribute. As champions of the circular economy, we will deploy a partnership model to ensure that all stakeholders work in collaboration to achieve lasting change to save our environment, our planet and our health.

B. "Local Pillar: Citizen Centered Urban Spaces"

As the world recovers from COVID-19, we want to accelerate the transformation of urban spaces into inclusive and sustainable places where citizens' wellbeing is prioritized. Empty offices will be transformed into green spaces for recreation, social housing through incentives for sustainable entrepreneurship. We will further improve city health by significantly reducing traffic and pollution, setting norms on industry and, where feasible, transforming roads into green spaces and pedestrian and cycling zone.

Pillar +1 - STATE REFORM

"A stronger and smarter Belgium for all citizens"

Belgian governance today is challenged by a fragmented democracy and inefficient political structure. A pragmatic approach towards the regional and national responsibilities is required to best serve and bring regions and federal entities together. As a Pan-European Belgian party we will, while respecting the communities, strengthen the federal government of Belgium. We aim to deconflict competences and to increase cooperation and harmonization between communities, regions and the federal government. We strive for all levels of government to be more efficient in organisation and administration and bring it closer to the citizens. We envision innovative means of citizen participation in policy-making, especially at the local level, in addition to the representative system.