

MESTREECH MADE IN EUROPE

Election Programme

Municipal Elections 2026

Volt



Maastricht

PROLOGUE

Europe is at a tipping point. While our traditional American ally is retreating from the world stage, a war is raging on the eastern edge of our continent, and our economy is under pressure from global upheavals. At the same time, Europe is rapidly reinventing itself. In Brussels, a new geopolitics is being shaped day and night. In the German Rhineland, industry is being rebuilt - including one of the world's largest AI centres. And in Eindhoven, a knowledge revolution is unfolding under the banner of Brainport, which will form the backbone of the Europe of tomorrow.

South Limburg lies at the intersection of these major European movements. Our Euregion has always stood at the crossroads of borders, languages, ideas, and developments - but today more than ever, our region finds itself at the heart of a changing Europe.

When we look ahead to the Maastricht of the coming years, one thing is clear: our city does not need a collection of isolated policy measures, but a clear European vision that sets Maastricht in motion. A European meeting place that remains livable for its elderly and vulnerable residents, while also becoming a home for the Maastricht residents of tomorrow - the people who will counter the ageing of our city. Volt presents a coherent plan to transform Maastricht into exactly that European meeting place.

To keep Maastricht livable, it is essential that the city becomes greener and safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Children should be able to cycle without fear, seniors should be able to walk safely, and tourism should be an asset to our city - not a reason to abandon it. That is why Volt is committed to a city that redirects tourist car traffic to park-and-ride facilities on the outskirts of the city. Across Europe, cities have already shown that a car-free city (despite initial concerns) leads to a more pleasant living environment for residents, entrepreneurs, and visitors alike. In this way, Maastricht remains livable for current residents while also becoming an attractive home for young families working in our border region.

Volt is also committed to a substantial increase in the sports and culture budget. Maastricht's social fabric depends on a strong sports and cultural sector. As the second cultural city of the Netherlands, Maastricht currently invests too little in this domain. By doubling the budget in the long term, sports and culture can provide the vital connections our city needs for the future. On the one hand, they bring together Maastricht residents of all ages, backgrounds, and neighbourhoods, while also engaging with challenges in healthcare, education, and the social domain. On the other hand, our cultural sector can strengthen Maastricht's European position by actively linking events and collaborations with cultural partners throughout the Euregion. In this way, culture becomes more than just a strength; it becomes a driving force behind our social and European ambitions.

VERKIEZINGSPROGRAMMA Volt Maastricht

Moreover, Maastricht and its region can only develop successfully if affordable housing is no longer a privilege, but a foundation on which the city can build. Volt therefore wants to expand Wyckerpoort by partially tunnelling the railway and constructing a new, affordable residential area above it; reconnecting the city and creating space for the future.

Finally, Maastricht must learn to turn its rich diversity of regional languages into a strength rather than an obstacle. Volt wants to invest in free language courses where possible, and affordable language courses where necessary. Dutch language courses should be free for students, so that newcomers are invited from the very start to become the Maastricht residents of tomorrow. The regional Limburgish language should become far more accessible to newcomers; so that even a new Maastricht resident could become Prince Carnival in 2030. At the same time, cross-border work must be actively encouraged by making French, German, and English language courses affordable and accessible; for Maastricht residents, but also for German and Belgian neighbours who wish to work in South Limburg.

When we truly embrace our location at the heart of Europe, Maastricht can develop into an economic and cultural hub of a changing world: a city that attracts talent, offers opportunities for young and old alike, and connects innovation between Brussels, Brainport, and the Rhineland. Together with our elected Volt representatives in Brabant, Aachen, Cologne, and Brussels, we are materialising a Mestreech - made in Europe.

Jules Ortjens
Party Leader Volt Maastricht



US

MESTREECH

OUR

EUROPE

This election programme is full of new ideas for the future. We'd understand it if you don't have time to read it all. That's why we've summarised our top five priorities on these next few pages.

**FIVE
PRIORITIES
FOR A
MESTREECH
MADE IN EUROPE**

PUT WALKING AND CYCLING AT THE HEART OF A GREENER CITY.

Maastricht must become a vibrant city where livability, healthy exercise, and space for people and greenery are a given. Walking and cycling should not only be possible, but actively encouraged. The city centre will remain as accessible as it is now for residents, businesses, staff, and caregivers, while visitors and tourists will be kindly directed to park-and-ride locations on the outskirts of the city. Parking spaces in the city centre will be gradually reduced to what is truly necessary for Maastricht residents who need to use their cars. This will create much more space for clean air, structural greening, and safe routes. Everyone benefits from this... but especially older and younger residents of Maastricht, who depend on a well-protected traffic environment. By making the city centre car-free, we follow the example of cities like Amsterdam, Bruges, Ghent, and Florence: there, livability is improved, while vibrancy and economic strength increase as well. A city thrives when space is given back to the people who live, work, and care for it.

INVEST MUCH MORE IN SPORTS AND CULTURE.

Maastricht calls itself the second cultural city of the Netherlands... but that requires action. Sports and culture should not only be a calling card for tourists, but also a powerful tool for building social connections, bringing residents together, and injecting new energy into the city. A vibrant cultural life can be the decisive factor for new residents to become part of our city and to remain so. Volt therefore wants to invest heavily in a sports and cultural policy that attracts young people and new target groups, as well as in initiatives that address social challenges through sports, art, music, theatre, and cultural events. We will use the additional revenue generated from the tourist tax to strengthen both existing sports and cultural partners and new initiatives. We will do this not only in the city centre, but especially in the suburbs as well. In this way, culture becomes a driving force behind a vibrant, connected, and inclusive Maastricht.

BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING ABOVE AN UNDERGROUND RAILWAY.

The housing crisis demands clear choices. Volt wants to build a new green residential area above and around Maastricht Station, reconnecting Wyck with East Maastricht: Wyckerpoort. Two scenarios are being considered: a railway tunnel, as in Delft, or an elevated residential area inspired by Heerlen. In addition, we will build new, affordable, and green residential areas elsewhere in the city. Those with the greatest responsibility should carry the greatest burden, so that first-time buyers, students, seniors, and families can find a place in Maastricht. With a new, broad housing vision, Maastricht is building a social future.

OFFER FREE LANGUAGE COURSES IN DUTCH, FRENCH AND GERMAN.

Volt wants all international newcomers in Maastricht to be able to learn Dutch for free and with ease, following the example of Eindhoven, Enschede, and Leuven. To make these courses truly attractive, universities and educational institutions must recognise them with appropriate credits. But in our Meuse–Rhine Euregion, it does not stop with Dutch alone. Our regional languages - Limburgish, French, and German - connect us as a region, strengthen our culture, and open up our labour market to new opportunities. By investing in broad language education, we reduce language barriers in schools and workplaces and increase opportunities for cross-border careers. In a city with a rapidly ageing population, it is crucial that young talent can put down permanent roots - and language is essential for this. The municipality, educational institutions, and the business community must therefore work more closely together to realise a wide and accessible range of language offerings at this European crossroads.

IMPROVE OUR EUROPEAN CONNECTIONS WITH GERMANY AND BELGIUM.

Maastricht and South Limburg are located in one of Europe's most strategically important regions: between the high-tech ecosystem of Eindhoven, the manufacturing strength of the German Ruhr area, and the political heart of Brussels. Volt wants to develop this position into a true economic hub where knowledge, innovation, and international cooperation reinforce one another. This means investing in better European bus and train connections, cross-border educational alliances, an integrated Euregion labour market, and cultural and economic exchanges with neighbouring cities: particularly in distinctive regional sectors such as healthcare and chemistry, but also in major future opportunities like the Einstein Telescope. By working intelligently with Aachen, Liège, Brussels, Cologne, Eindhoven, and the wider Euregion, we make our region more attractive to young talent, entrepreneurs, and researchers. In doing so, we connect Europe's opportunities with the needs of our city. Maastricht should no longer present itself as a remote corner of the Netherlands, but as what it has always been: a unique and proud border city that builds international bridges.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

A Walkable and Bicycle-Friendly Maastricht

1.1 Make the centre of Maastricht car-free:	14
1.2 A new use for Maastricht's garages:	15
1.3 Safety and quality of life outside the city centre:	16
1.4 The pedestrian is king, the cyclist is prince:	16
1.5 Cycling through Europe:	17
1.6 More park-and-ride locations on the outskirts of the city:	17
1.7 No Maastricht-Aachen Airport, but a Cologne-Brussels line:	18

Chapter 2

A Green and Sustainable Maastricht

2.1 From concrete city to Europe's green capital:	20
2.2 The Molenweg is the green line:	21
2.3 The Maastricht Green Heart:	21
2.4 Green energy, first for the smallest budget:	22
2.5 A green industry in the heart of Europe:	23
2.6 From waste disposal to a circular economy:	23
2.7 Cross-border water policy for our city on the Meuse:	24
2.8 A car-free centre creates more greenery:	25
2.9 Resilience	25

Chapter 3

A Livable Maastricht

3.1 More active land policy to combat the housing crisis:	27
3.2 More funding for housing:	28

3.3 The Wyckerpoort - a new residential area in the heart of Maastricht:	28
3.4 A housing policy with more courage and creativity:	29
3.5 A proper home in Maastricht for caravan dwellers:	30
3.6 A liveable Maastricht means a liveable South Limburg:	30
3.7 A second home in Maastricht? Not right now...	31
3.8 Stricter purchase protection for homes:	31
3.9 Scaling the heights with Randwyck! Towards a Maastricht Strijp-S:	31
3.10 No Maastricht Aachen Airport, but a Maastricht Aachen Residential Area:	32

Chapter 4

A Solidarity-based Maastricht

4.1 Reliable poverty policy:	34
4.2 't Peske makes the Maastricht system more accessible:	35
4.3 South Limburg social policy - within and outside education:	35
4.4 The Maastricht Living Room:	36
4.5 The social domain must be data-supported:	37
4.6 Learn from Europe! Bring the Healthcare Coach to Maastricht:	37
4.7 Free families from debt, increase their chances:	38
4.8 Unequal opportunities due to functional illiteracy:	38
4.9 Provide an integral healthcare waitinglist:	39

Chapter 5

A Young Maastricht

5.1 Keep the schools in West Maastricht!	41
5.2 Learning Dutch? That should be free!	42
5.3 Make learning Limburgish attractive:	42
5.4 One South Limburg education network for the future:	43
5.5 Euregional talent for the future:	44

5.6 The Plan for the New Maastrichtian:	45
---	----

Chapter 6

A Culturally Connecting Maastricht

6.1 A clear vision for Maastricht's culture and sport:	47
6.2 More money for arts, culture and sports:	48
6.3 Culture and sport as a foundation for a Maastricht of solidarity:	49
6.4 MVV as Maastricht's ultimate community centre:	49
6.5 Save Landbouwbelang (LBB)	50
6.6 A new nightlife for Maastricht:	50
6.7 Bring cultural incubators closer to the neighbourhood	51
6.8 Culture as concrete to unify the European border region:	51
6.9 Act as a university city - also in the cultural sector:	52

Chapter 7

An Innovative Maastricht

7.1 The city centre at the table: a greener, more liveable, and enterprising centre:	56
7.2 More space for shared mobility:	57
7.3 Brightlands: the South Limburg engine for innovation:	57
7.4 Learn from Copenhagen, use the tourist!	58
7.5 Beatrixhaven – port of the future:	58
7.6 A more rational drug policy for Maastricht and Europe:	59

Chapter 8

An Inclusive Maastricht

8.1 Our region as a final destination – not as a stopover:	61
8.2 Refugees are Maastrichtians, too!	62
8.3 Distributing status holders according to the 'strongest shoulders':	63
8.4 An inclusive Maastricht is a proud Maastricht:	63

8.5 Building bridges throughout the city:	63
8.6 An inclusive Maastricht is a safe Maastricht:	64
8.7 The Rainbow Community in Maastricht:	64

Chapter 9

A Democratic Maastricht

9.1 One permanent Citizens' Council:	67
9.2 Euregional Citizen Councils:	68
9.3 Democracy in education:	68
9.4 Guarantee the right to demonstrate:	69
9.5 Cooperation without looking away:	69
9.6 Working on a lobby register:	69
9.7 Democracy starts with accessibility:	70
9.8 Bring local politics to the neighborhoods:	70
9.9 A Maastricht democracy meter:	70

Chapter 10

A European Maastricht

10.1 Maastricht is a European city:	72
10.2 Learning from Europe:	73
10.3 Maastricht as a European ambassador city:	73

CHAPTER 1

A WALKABLE AND BICYCLE-FRIENDLY MAASTRICHT



A livable, safe, and healthy city is a city that breathes. A city where children can safely cycle to school, where seniors can walk to the bus stop without fear, and where fresh air is not a privilege, but a basic right.

The healthy Maastricht of the future begins with a walkable and bicycle-friendly Maastricht: a Maastricht where space, safety, and tranquillity are created. **In 2024 alone, the police registered 791 traffic accidents in Maastricht**, a significant increase compared to 2022 (633) and 2021 (545)¹.

The city needs a makeover. **The centre should become a car-free zone in the long term, following the examples of Ghent, Bruges, and Amsterdam.** This means that residents, businesses, staff, and caregivers remain welcome to drive, while visitors will be redirected to existing and new park-and-ride locations on the outskirts of the city, such as Maastricht-Noord and Randwyck.

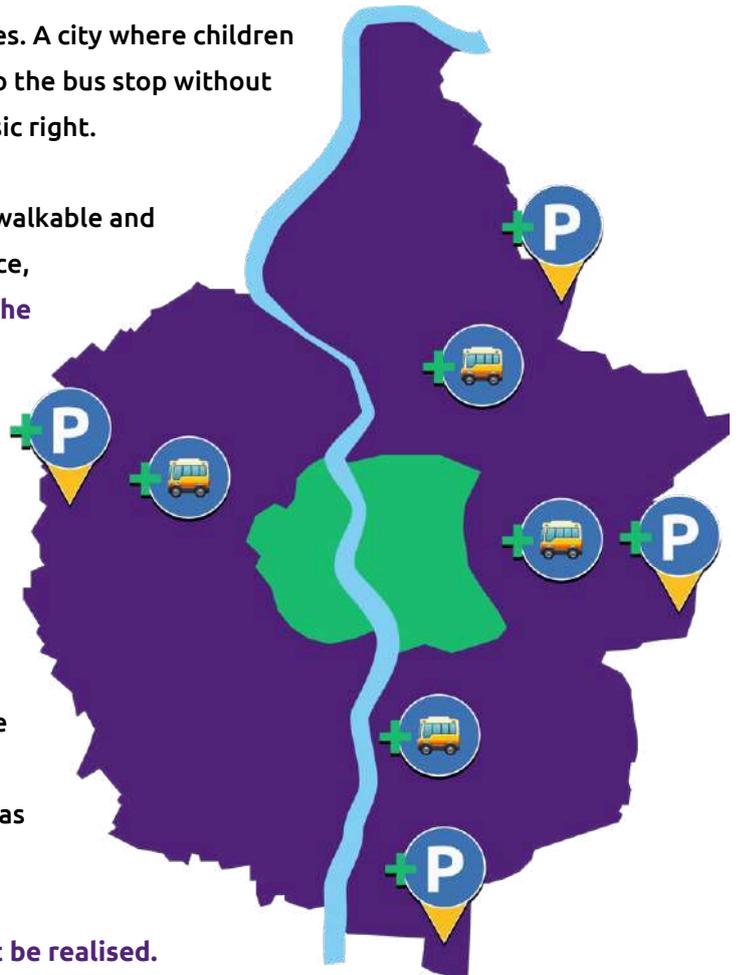
Outside the centre, more 30-kilometre zones must be realised.

Planters and trees are intended to encourage motorists to drive more slowly.

A walkable and bicycle-friendly Maastricht does not mean an inaccessible Maastricht. On the contrary, reduced car traffic creates **more space for public transport**. This is essential, not only for travelling within Maastricht, but also for reaching other places in the (Eu)region more quickly and safely.

1.1 Make the centre of Maastricht car-free:

Volt wants the pedestrian to be central, not the car, not only in the city centre but throughout the entire centre of Maastricht. In addition to the positive effects this will have on the livability and safety of the city centre, studies show that **a better living environment² leads to a significant strengthening of the local economy³**. That is why we consider a car-free city centre a major priority. For us, a car-free city centre means that only traffic that truly needs to enter is allowed. The car-free centre therefore remains accessible at all times for residents, entrepreneurs, staff, and informal caregivers, as well as for emergency services and public transport. Tourist cars will no longer be allowed to enter the city centre.



1. Number of traffic accidents in Maastricht rises to highest level since 2017, *Algemeen Dagblad*. [Link](#)

2. Waarom een autovrije stad ook heel toegankelijk kan zijn, *Erasmus University Rotterdam*. [Link](#)

3. Clifton, K., Currans, K. M., Muhs, C. D., Ritter, C., Morrissey, S., & Roughton, C. (2012). *Consumer behavior and travel choices: A focus on cyclists and pedestrians*. [Link](#)

- The car-free zone will **cover the entire centre of Maastricht**, meaning the area within the canals and the railway. This includes the Inner City, the Jekerkwartier, Kommelkwartier, Statenkwartier, Boschstraatkwartier, as well as Wyck and Sint Maartenspoort.
- **Working Maastricht must not be hindered.** If Maastricht residents need a car in the city centre for commuting or for loading and unloading, this traffic will be granted an exceptional status.
- For exceptional situations, such as a family member or friend moving house, **a day permit for the car-free zone can be requested.** This will be facilitated both online and offline.
- **Tourists and visitors without a day permit will no longer be allowed to enter the city centre by car.** They will be directed to park-and-ride (P&R) locations outside the city canals, such as Maastricht-Noord. Important access points for visitors, such as the German Gate at the railway crossing, will be closed to through traffic. Smart P&R connections and sustainable public transport will ensure that the city becomes car-free without hindering businesses or employees.
- **Enforcement will take place through traffic signs, cameras, street narrowing, and active law enforcement.** Thanks to new agreements with neighbouring countries on zero-emission zones, Maastricht will also be able to fine foreign licence plates.
- The city centre will be redesigned step by step. **Less space for cars and parking will create more room for greenery.**
- **For residents who are physically challenged, or for whom public transport is not a safe option, an exception can be made.**

1.2 A new use for Maastricht's garages:

The parking garage beneath the Vrijthof generates the highest volume of car traffic in the city centre. Making Maastricht car-free will only succeed if this garage is given a different use: no more day visitors, only permit holders. This can be addressed in the next council term, as the contract between the municipality and Q-Park for all parking garages expires in 2032. The municipality owns the land, while Q-Park operates the garages. From 2028 onwards, the contract allows the municipality to begin negotiations on an alternative use for the Vrijthof garage and, potentially, also the garage at the Onze Lieve Vrouweplein.

- Volt wants the parking garages in the city centre to be **used exclusively by car drivers who live, work, do business, or provide care in the city centre.**
- As underground parking spaces become available for residents, **on-street parking spaces can be gradually reduced**, as they are no longer needed. This creates more space on the street for trees, planters, and bicycle parking.
- **Volt continues to pay close attention to residents who have difficulty walking.** Residents in this category who live within the low-traffic zone must, of course, retain access to a car close to their home. For residents in this category who live outside the zone, it is important that the municipality preserves the possibility of visiting the city centre by car, so that they can continue to participate fully in society.

1.3 Safety and quality of life outside the city centre:

Even in neighbourhoods outside the city centre, Volt prioritises safety and livability over accessibility for tourists and visitors. We therefore want to significantly expand the number of 30-kilometre roads. Only major traffic arteries, such as the Kennedy Bridge, the Noorderbrug, and the Maasboulevard tunnel, will retain higher speed limits in order to ensure safe traffic flow.

- **Maastricht must explicitly embrace Belgium's STOP principle:** pedestrians (Stappers) first, then cyclists (Trappers), followed by public transport (Openbaar Vervoer), and only then passenger cars (Persoonsauto's). Flemish cities such as Ghent and Bruges, as well as Maastricht's neighbouring cities of Genk and Hasselt, demonstrate that this approach works. Volt wants to apply this Flemish model in Maastricht.
- Roads in residential areas should be less inviting to speeding. **Volt wants to narrow streets and, where possible, place green barriers, such as the planters on the Scharnerweg.** Speed bumps or one-way streets will be installed where necessary.
- Ultimately, we focus on **additional speed bumps and one-way streets.** However, it must always be carefully assessed whether such measures could hinder ambulances and other emergency services.
- To enforce the 30 km policy, **speed cameras will be installed at dangerous intersections and traffic signage will be made clearer.** Fines have a deterrent effect and can partly recoup the investment in speed cameras and traffic signs.
- **Volt supports the plan to extend the Groene Loper (Green Corridor) to Randwyck.** This will make the neighbourhood greener and provide safe, attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

1.4 The pedestrian is king, the cyclist is prince:

Cycling in Maastricht is often a sensitive issue. It is not only dangerous for cyclists themselves, but can also cause tension with pedestrians and other road users. With the rise of faster electric bicycles, safe infrastructure is more urgent than ever. That is why Volt wants to create wider and better cycle paths, without this being at the expense of pedestrians.

- Based on the research results of *Loop!* by Guus van den Akker⁴, we put the pedestrian first⁵.
- **Volt wants a clear vision for cycle highways across the city.** From Heugem to Itteren and from Daalhof to Amby, cycling should be smooth, with safe and well-lit routes, especially for women and vulnerable road users. We use the ambitions of the Cyclists' Union as inspiration to improve the network.⁶
- The 8–88 network is prioritised. This means **safe cycling routes between schools and neighbourhoods, as well as accessible walking routes for older residents.** Bridges such as the Kennedybrug and the Noorderbrug should also be made more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists, preferably with additional greenery.
- **Traffic lights must remain green for considerably longer for cyclists and pedestrians.**
- **Existing cycle lanes should be painted red consistently.**

4. Guus van den Akker en Ruimte voor lopen, *Loop! Knelpunten in Maastricht*. [Link](#)

5. Netwerk Duurzame Mobiliteit, *Het Stop-Principe*. [Link](#)

6. Grotere fietsambities. De Fietsersbond Maastricht en Heuvelland. [Link](#)

- Where possible, **new narrowed streets provide more space for sidewalks and bicycle paths.**
- Fat bike users often find themselves in dangerous situations. Sometimes because they endanger themselves, sometimes because they endanger others. A mandatory helmet requirement for fat bikes is not yet possible at the municipal level, but other cities (such as Enschede) have tried it. Maastricht will have to join forces with these like-minded cities to lobby for **a safer fat bike-policy.**
- Volt wants Maastricht University to work together with the municipality to **organise a “Safe in the City” programme during introductory days.** New students, regardless of their nationality, must learn how to move safely through the city, especially as cyclists, but also as pedestrians and motorists. (see also: *5.5 Euregional talent for the future*).

1.5 Cycling through Europe:

European cyclists in our border region are often hampered by the lack of cycling connections between cities and neighbouring countries. Volt wants to improve the development of European cycling highways, so that bicycles, both regular and electric, become a viable alternative for travel within the surrounding region.

- The municipality is already collaborating with neighbouring municipalities and using provincial funding for long-distance cycling routes. Volt wants Maastricht to actively participate in this. Through **an active lobby towards the European Union, additional resources can be secured from European funds for sustainable, cross-border infrastructure.** This will help transform the Meuse–Rhine region into a well-connected cycling area.

1.6 More park-and-ride locations on the outskirts of the city:

A car-free city centre requires smart access to the outskirts of Maastricht. Volt therefore wants to **develop new park-and-ride locations** where visitors can park their cars and reach the city by bus, bicycle, or on foot.

- We will **expand parking options at the edges of the city** and construct multi-level garages that free up space for greenery. Randwyck station will gain a large new parking facility on the east side of the A2 to accommodate car traffic from the south.
- Volt wants **bus lines to be better connected to these park-and-ride locations** and wants visitors to be able to find their way easily to the city centre. Signage and digital communication about park-and-ride facilities need to be improved.
- We also want to encourage MECC visitors to leave their cars at home when they travel into the city. That is why we will improve the walking route from Randwyck to Wyck and the city centre by making it greener, safer, and better lit. In this way, we make the transition from car to city a natural one.

1.7 No Maastricht-Aachen Airport, but a Cologne-Brussels line:

The hourly three-country train (Liège-Maastricht-Heerlen-Aachen) has been an important first step for the province, but Volt wants the South Limburg Cooperation Foundation, the Parkstad City Region, and the Meuse–Rhine Euregion to intensify their efforts and prioritise better European public transport through a strong lobbying strategy for a Charlemagne Line.

- As our first lobbying goal, we want **trains to Aachen and Liège to run twice an hour, earlier in the morning and later in the evening**. This will make travelling to work from Maastricht by train much more attractive, even when the workplace is located in one of our neighbouring countries. Achieving this also requires improvements in train reliability, as well as clearer and more transparent information provision and ticket sales, which Arriva has previously identified as areas for improvement.⁷
- Ultimately, a **direct train connection to Brussels and Cologne** is our dot on the horizon. The lobby for this Charlemagne Line will need to focus on provincial, national (Dutch, German, and Belgian), and European politics. See also the election manifesto of our fellow party members at Volt Aachen⁸. Volt is also committed to preserving the railway bridge, so that the Maastricht–Hasselt railway line can be reopened in the future (see: *10.1 Maastricht is a European city*).
- We want a strong South Limburg lobby for **more trains to Heerlen and Sittard-Geleen**, so that living and working in South Limburg becomes more attractive. Preventing the frequent cancellations of Arriva trains should be the most important short-term priority of this lobby.
- Maastricht must reduce its **financial contribution to Maastricht Aachen Airport (MAA) as quickly as possible**. The airport does not generate sufficient returns for the city and the region⁹, while coming at the expense of nature and the living environment. We want to use the funds that are freed up to lobby in South Limburg for better connections to European high-speed rail lines. We also want to develop a new residential area on the site of the closed airport (see *3.10 No Maastricht Aachen Airport, but a Maastricht Aachen Residential Area*).

7. Arriva acknowledges criticism that online ticket sales and information provision for Drielandentrein could be improved, *De Limburger*. [Link](#)

8. Volt Aachen Wahlprogramm 2026, p. 32, *Volt Nordrhein-Westfalen*. [Link](#)

9. MAA suffered a record loss of €11.5 million in 2024. Several international airports are already located within a 100-kilometer radius, including Liège, Düsseldorf, Eindhoven, and Cologne. See also: L1Nieuws (2025). MAA recordverlies van 11,5 miljoen euro, provincie schiet te hulp. [Link](#)

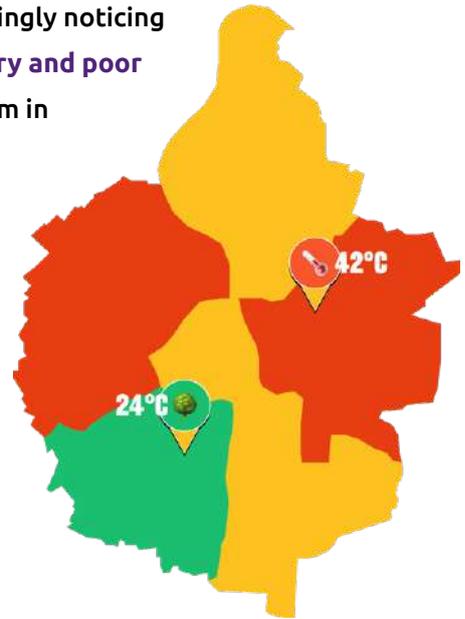
CHAPTER 2

A GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE MAASTRICHT



The climate is becoming unbalanced worldwide, and we are increasingly noticing this in Maastricht as well. **Hot summers, flooding, a lack of greenery and poor air quality weigh heavily on the city.** Maastricht ranks at the bottom in terms of greening: placing 161st among all Dutch municipalities¹⁰. Furthermore, Maastricht has the worst air quality in the Netherlands, after our neighboring cities Heerlen and Sittard-Geleen¹¹.

The consequences of climate change don't affect everyone equally. Poorer neighbourhoods have less green space, more poorly insulated homes, and fewer options for coping with heat stress or flooding. **Maastricht is facing a 'green divide'.** In this way, climate change also widens the gap between different neighbourhoods and residents.



Volt wants to reverse this trend with a **Maastricht Green Deal**. Facilitated by the local government, we are developing a joint action plan that will focus on six themes that together form the foundation of a livable future: traffic, energy, circularity, climate adaptation, nature, and the environment.

2.1 From concrete city to Europe's green capital:

Volt has pointed out on several occasions that Maastricht is struggling with a massive Green Gap¹². Recent research shows that on certain hot summer days, temperatures of 24 degrees are recorded in Sint Pieter, while at the very same time, it reaches 42 degrees in Heugemerveld¹³. In Maastricht, this symbolises the green city's green divide: there is far **too strong a correlation between heat stress and poverty**.

- The annual budget for greening in the municipality of Maastricht currently stands at approximately 7 million euros¹⁴. Another one million euros should be allocated to this budget, specifically earmarked for **greening neighbourhoods with low average incomes**, such as Heugemerveld, Wittevrouwenveld, Malpertuis, Nazareth, Caberg, and Mariaberg¹⁵.
- While the **greening of more affluent neighborhoods will also be expanded**, we propose doing this through citizen participation. New green spaces in these more affluent neighbourhoods would be funded by resident-led fundraising, facilitated by the municipality.
- Volt wants Maastricht to learn from Europe's greenest cities: the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, and the cities of Viladecans (Spain) and Treviso (Italy). Last year, these were named **European Green Capitals** for their outstanding environmental efforts. Volt argues that Maastricht should set a concrete goal to run for this title during the next council term. This would provide our greening policy with a clear, ambitious objective.

10. Waar staat je gemeente, VNG (2021): [Link](#)

11. Rankings, ISGlobal (2025): [Link](#)

12. Ortjens, J., Frijters, R., Den Heijer, M. (2025). *Maastricht: 10 challenges for our future*.

13. *De Limburger* (2023). Logo dltha (84) en Thea (79) wonen in de heetste wijk van Limburg: 'Ik zat in de kelder omdat ik paniekerig werd van de hitte'. [Link](#)

14. *Gemeente Maastricht*, Begrotingsprogramma 2025. [Link](#)

15. Hoogste en laagste inkomen per buurt in de gemeente Maastricht, *Alle Cijfers*. [Link](#)

- The current green standard of 15% for the historic city center included in the draft environmental vision is not ambitious enough as far as Volt is concerned¹⁶. This target must be increased to the municipality's current green target percentage for the rest of the city by the end of the next term. This means that **40% of the city must then be greened**, with initial efforts focused on neighbourhoods that currently have the least green space and the lowest average incomes. We aim to foster a robust, healthy diversity of native plant and animal species through a new biodiversity strategy for Maastricht. The biodiversity plans of the municipalities of Nijmegen and Amsterdam will serve as inspiration for this.
- **We will equip squares with shade sails** and maximise greening in these areas.
- We encourage the **installation of green roofs** by residents and businesses, and will implement them directly on buildings managed by the municipality.
- Streets covered by our low-traffic plan (**30 km/h zones**) **will be enhanced with significantly more greenery** to cool the city, such as the Avenue Céramique.
- Finally, Maastricht must **join the European National Park City initiative**. This started in London and has since been established in Rotterdam, Breda, and Berlin¹⁷. Under this title, a city is guided by international experts towards further greening and commits to upholding this environmental role long into the future.

2.2 The Molenweg is the green line:

The green fringes of the city remain a sacred border: **we will not permit any building beyond the Molenweg**. Other green spaces on the outskirts of the city must also be preserved as much as possible. Instead, we will adopt a creative approach to development within the existing urban footprint. By placing a greater focus on high-rise buildings (noting that the current standard, set by 'de Colonel' near the station, does not need to be exceeded to achieve this), we can ensure it is entirely unnecessary to build in the surrounding natural environment. See also the third chapter: *a Liveable Maastricht*.

2.3 The Maastricht Green Heart:

The busy Prins Bisschopsingel is an unwanted barrier for those who want to enjoy Maastricht's greenery. Volt wants to investigate the possibility of **developing a park bridge over the Singel**, featuring well-insulating greenery. This will connect the Sint Pieter park area with the city park and the green space on the Wyck side of the Hoge Brug. In this way, we are developing a Green Heart: a Maastricht 'Central Park' that connects Wyck, the city center, and Maastricht-West in a single continuous green walking route. This also includes improving walking routes along the relatively green and cool Jeker and Meuse valleys, in collaboration with the municipality of Riemst, so that these can be extended to Kanne.

16. Ontwerp Omgevingsvisie 2040. *Gemeente Maastricht*. [Link](#)

17. *Breda National Park City*. [Link](#)

2.4 Green energy, first for the smallest budget:

Volt wants energy and climate policy to start from the perspective of energy poverty. People with a small budget or high energy bills should be helped first: **sustainability should not be a privilege.**

- Households with lower incomes will therefore be given priority in the heat transition and for subsidies, such as those for white goods or solar panels.
- To gain more control over a fair and social energy transition, Volt supports **the establishment of a municipal heating and energy company.**
- Volt is initially focusing on installing as many solar panels as possible. We are also open to **promising wind turbine projects from private individuals.** For the remaining RES (Regional Energy Strategy) targets¹⁸, we are also looking at how neighbouring municipalities, both within the Netherlands and across the border, can be included in a broader regional energy strategy.
- With the new energy law of 2026¹⁹, energy sharing will become possible through specific structures, such as energy communities and cooperatives. **Volt wants the municipality to facilitate residents who wish to share energy in this way.** For example, if a solar panel owner generates excess power and wants to share it with their neighbours.
- Volt wants **knowledge about sustainability to be accessible to everyone.** The municipality's energy desk should be made more visible by actively approaching residents and business owners with energy-saving tips. In this context, CNME's energy coaches²⁰ can be utilised to increase the visibility of the energy desk. Volt wants the existing Maastricht Climate House and the '*Maastricht Houses*' proposed by Volt (*see also: 4.4*) to collaborate so that residents receive advice and guidance close to home regarding insulation, solar panels, and energy conservation. The municipality also needs more financial support for this valuable initiative to more widely disseminate tailored energy advice. Neighbourhoods with higher energy poverty will be prioritised for this support. Volt also wants more discussion about sustainability and climate knowledge in education.
- The average tree density in Maastricht is 28 trees per 100 residents; in the average Dutch municipality, this is 52 trees per 100 residents. Volt follows the example of Den Bosch: **the standard should be one tree per inhabitant, so 100 per 100.**
- **This tree density should be implemented using the so-called '3-30-300' principle.** The aim is that from every house, office, or school building, at least 3 trees should be visible, 30% of the neighbourhood must be covered by tree canopy, and there must be access to high-quality public green space within 300 a 300-metre walking distance²¹.
- The Trega-Zinkwit heating network, which will be implemented with a reserve of €3.5 million by the RoyalMosa BV and the Limmel wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is a good examples of this.

18. Provincie start nieuwe zoektocht naar windmolenlocaties, tegenstanders worden wakker door kaartje met zoekgebieden: 'Wij blijven strijden'. *De Limburger*. [Link](#)

19. *Energieparticipatie* (2025). [Link](#)

20. Energiecoaches van CNME. [Link](#)

21. *IVN - 3-30-300-regel* (2025). [Link](#)

2.5 A green industry in the heart of Europe:

The green transition for European industry is crucial and complex: we must help companies become greener without them relocating to countries with weaker climate regulations, such as China and the United States. Volt wants Maastricht to lead the way in this. **We actively support Sappi, Mosa Tiles and other industries in their electrification efforts.**

- Active cooperation will be sought **with other industries in the Meuse-Rhine region**, so that we can learn from each other's greening processes in an open and transparent manner.. The industries of Chemelot, Liège, and Aachen will be the first to be examined.

2.6 From waste disposal to a circular economy:

Volt aims to promote a circular economy throughout Europe: an economy that minimises its impact on nature, as almost all materials are reused. By using less, we prevent unnecessary emissions. By using products for longer, we save money. And by (re)using raw materials locally, we create jobs and business opportunities. Maastricht can lead the way in this: **less waste, more reuse, and a local economy driven by the smart use of raw materials.**

- The municipality itself must set a good example in the circular economy: **through a stricter circular procurement policy**, a focus will be placed on reducing the use of raw materials, and environmentally friendly alternatives will be prioritised.
- Sustainable procurement plays a major role in the circular economy. **The municipality should increasingly opt for local entrepreneurs and partners in tendering procedures and set sustainability as a strict condition.** In this way, we stimulate the local and circular economy by, for example, involving local project developers and subsidizing sustainable building materials, such as cross-laminated timber instead of concrete, and construction methods such as modular construction in area developments²².
- Volt wants people and businesses to use their possessions for longer. A broken phone or piece of clothing should not have to be thrown away immediately. That is why Volt wants the municipality to strengthen its collaboration with Werkhuis, MTB, and Podium24, so that **more residents can contribute to repair and re-use projects through work or volunteer work.**
- Repair cafes and re-use centres are not only sustainable, but also social: they prevent e-waste, promote community interaction, and offer workplaces to those distanced from the labour market. **Volt wants the municipality to provide structural support for these initiatives, increase their visibility, and integrate them into waste and circularity policies.**
- Re-use must become the norm, including through **circular construction in urban development** (such as in Limmel and the Sphinxkwartier) and the use of reusable materials in municipal procurement, such as textiles and plastics.
- Volt wants the municipality of Maastricht, **together with authorities in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine, to establish a circular platform to develop closer ties with the regional manufacturing industry**

22. Circulariteit in de bouw. DGMR. [Link](#)

and other companies that produce or require large quantities of materials. The municipalities will then investigate which specific materials can be collected and repurposed.

- The **ties between the Municipality and Kringloop Zuid must remain strong**. The municipality should therefore take action to make the services of Kringloop Zuid more affordable.
- We are exploring options for a **South Limburg circular construction market**, where reusable building materials can be dropped off for free and purchased at a low cost.
- The **recycling centres (milieuparken) will be expanded**, both in numbers and size.

2.7 Cross-border water policy for our city on the Meuse:

With the Meuse running through its center, water has always been an essential element of our city. Volt wants Maastricht to be **better prepared for future water challenges**, such as droughts and floods. In this way, we will make Maastricht a climate-resilient city for the future.

- **Volt wants to work together with Flanders, Wallonia and the border municipalities on sustainable cross-border water management** for the Meuse region. We will continue to build on this on the existing Grensmaas project, in which Maastricht is already a key participant. As a gateway between the Belgian and Dutch Meuse regions, Volt wants our municipality to take the lead in this. This is especially important for establishing a clear basis for cooperation with Eupen and Liège against future flood threats.
- Within the city, we advocate for **more so-called 'wadis': shallow basins that collect rainwater and allow it to infiltrate the soil**. A challenge for a compact city like Maastricht is the amount of space such measures require. However, we can create these basins in our parks, green spaces in the neighbourhoods, and in the space freed up by a car-light city center. Copenhagen's successful model²³ and the development plan for the Rolduckerveld in Kerkrade²⁴ serve as inspiration for this.
- We encourage **innovative forms of water storage in new urban developments** and aim to use our water more efficiently. For example, consider the water buffer currently being constructed under the new town hall square in Heerlen²⁵. This buffer will collect rainwater during extreme downpours and allows it to slowly filter into the soil during periods of drought. This is beneficial for both climate adaptation and soil health. To implement such ideas in Maastricht, the municipality must collaborate with the water board and WML, for example, to qualify for the 'kansenregeling' (opportunity scheme) for flood mitigation projects²⁶.
- To promote water collection in gardens, Volt wants **distribute free rain barrels and, as a municipality, assist with the 'de-tiling' (removing paving) in gardens**, starting in the eight neighbourhoods with the lowest average incomes²⁷. We would eventually like to make this possible throughout Maastricht. This builds upon the municipality's previous initiatives²⁸.

23. Cloudburst Management Plan - Copenhagen. [Link](#)

24. Inrichtingsplan Rolduckerveld. Gemeente Kerkrade. [Link](#)

25. A 1.3 million-liter water buffer is intended to protect Heerlen from flooding, L1nieuws. [Link](#)

2.8 A car-free centre creates more greenery:

In the previous chapter (see: *a walkable and bicycle-friendly Maastricht*) we discussed making our city center car-free and ensuring the rest of the city is more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly. Many of the plans we proposed there directly create space for more greenery:

- Roads can be narrowed due to the reduction in car traffic, and on-street parking spaces in the city centre can be gradually phased out. This creates **more space for trees and planters** along these narrowed roads and in the vacated parking spots.
- Street furniture should be used to encourage drivers to drive more slowly through a street. **This street furniture can often consist of large planters**, which provide further greening.
- The closure of Q-Park garages can also allow various parking spaces to be filled in, **enabling more substantial greenery, such as trees, to take root on top of these garages.**

2.9 Resilience

Both climate change and cyberattacks can have a significant impact on our city's residents, think of heat stress, flooding, or prolonged power outages. The most vulnerable groups are hit the hardest. **Volt Maastricht proposes setting up community centres as emergency support points that can provide initial shelter in the event of such calamities.** For example, these could serve as a cool places during heatwaves, locations where residents can charge their phones during a power outage, or where a cup of soup is provided in the event of disruption lasting more than 24 hours.

- In addition, **Volt wants the municipality of Maastricht to be actively committed to training associations and volunteers and deploying them in emergency situations**, so that the city is better prepared for crisis situations and solidarity within neighborhoods is strengthened.
- Furthermore, Volt would like the municipality to become **independent of non-European tech giants as soon as possible, for both hardware and software.** We prefer European, green alternatives. This makes our systems, such as the population register, less vulnerable to geopolitical tensions and price increases. The alderman responsible for digitalisation will take a leading role within national networks such as the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) and the G40.

26. Waterschap Limburg. 2025. Kansenregeling verlengd: meer tijd en ruimte voor projecten tegen wateroverlast. [Link](#)

27. Limmel, Malpertuis, Pottenberg, Nazareth, Caberg, Mariaberg, Malberg en Wittevroutenveld. Hoogste en laagste inkomen per buurt in de gemeente Maastricht, Alle Cijfers. [Link](#)

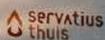
28. Gratis watertonnen om drinkwater te besparen, RTV Maastricht. [Link](#)



mosaïek

Hier komt Mosaïek

Een nieuw stukje Wyckerpoort



WESKI Vastgoed

Bezoek ons op mosaiek-wyckerpoort.nl

CHAPTER 3

A LIVABLE MAASTRICHT

Volt wants a **Maastricht that is liveable for everyone once again**. The housing market is currently struggling with rising rents and purchase prices, a shortage of affordable housing, and a lack of sustainability improvements. What we're seeing in Maastricht is part of a broader European housing crisis, stretching from Aachen to Lisbon. It particularly affects young people, the elderly, and residents on low incomes. While many of the solutions must be provided at the national and European levels, municipalities also have a responsibility to make a difference locally.

Volt wants the municipality to focus on **creative building strategies within the existing urban area**, without the Heuvelland region suffering as a result. This means making smarter use of the space we already have: building above railway zones, following the examples of Heerlen and Delft, and creating new high-rise developments in modern neighbourhoods like Randwyck.

In addition, we want **the municipality to regain control over its land and housing**. The municipality must pursue an active land policy and purchase vacant land as soon as it becomes available, ensuring that policy, and not the market, determines what is built. We are exploring the establishment of a municipal housing company so that the municipality can structurally invest in social housing, affordable housing, and sustainable residential options.

Together, we are building a liveable Maastricht, which can only be achieved with the necessary solidarity. This must be a city where Maastricht residents who are less fortunate can rely on a housing market supported by those with the 'strongest shoulders'. Volt is therefore presenting various proposals **to make Maastricht a supportive residential city once again**: a city where residents who have more also contribute a little more, so that together we can build security, affordability, and liveability for everyone.

3.1 More active land policy to combat the housing crisis:

According to the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP), Maastricht ranks third nationally on the list of municipalities with the most one-sided living environments. This means that the least affluent 20% of residents rarely come into contact with other residents; in other words, Maastricht is highly segregated²⁹. Volt aims to bridge this gap with a social and cohesive housing vision, for which an active land policy is essential. As soon as land becomes available, the municipality must proactively acquire it, even if specific development plans are not yet in place. This ownership allows Maastricht to impose stricter requirements on developers, focusing on affordable housing and more green space. In this way, the city itself, not the market, determines how Maastricht remains liveable for everyone.

²⁹ Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, *De Leefwerelden van Arm en Rijk* (2024), pp. 39-40. [Link](#)

- The municipality is already taking significant steps, but often still acts too cautiously. Currently, purchases are still being assessed based on urgency³⁰. As far as Volt is concerned, however, **every proactive and strategic purchase is urgent in the midst of a housing crisis**.
- The current financial ceilings for proactive purchasing policy and strategic purchasing policies are 20 million and 5 million, respectively³¹. This is the financial leeway the municipal executive receives to purchase land before its intended use is discussed with the Council. **Volt believes both purchasing budgets should be increased to 25 million and 10 million, respectively**. After all, these funds are continuously replenished by financially sound land development projects.

3.2 More funding for housing:

Volt wants Maastricht to become a city where people on average incomes and those with modest means can once again find a place to live. This is becoming increasingly difficult: rents are rising, affordable homes are disappearing, and waiting lists for social housing remain long. At the same time, Maastricht is among the ten municipalities with the lowest average incomes in the Netherlands³². This means that **significant investment is required in housing those people can afford**. Currently, the municipality intends to increase the property tax (OZB) only in line with inflation (+2.1%), which is simply not enough.

- To build structurally accessible housing in Maastricht, we must levy property tax more fairly. In Volt's view, it is necessary to align property tax rates for owner-occupied homes in Maastricht with those of similar municipalities³³. Bringing Maastricht's rates in line with these peer municipalities would mean an increase of approximately 16.8%. Specifically, this represents a rise from 0.101% to 0.118% of the assessed (WOZ) value of a home³⁴.
- In total, this would provide the municipality with approximately **€7 million** per year on³⁵. Volt intends to **invest this sum entirely into new social housing, affordable owner-occupied homes and cooperative housing projects**. This is how we build a city where everyone can find a home, and where those with the 'strongest shoulders' contribute their fair share.

3.3 The Wyckerpoort - a new residential area in the heart of Maastricht:

Volt wants the city to develop a concrete strategy for a new residential area on the railway site of Maastricht Station. This requires a substantial lobbying budget. Implementing such a plan for the railway zone will require significant investment, which can only be secured through major funds from The Hague and Brussels. The Wyckerpoort must become **a new, green residential area with a diverse range of housing**, connecting Wyck with East Maastricht.

- Volt believes the municipality should learn from the past. We propose reviving the **integrated lobby team that made the Green Corridor (Groene Loper) possible through government funds**. The Wyckerpoort will, in effect, become our new Green Corridor.

³⁰ *Maastricht Beleid* (2022). Kadernota 2022, Hoofdstuk 4: Grondbeleid (pp. 16-40). [Link](#)

³¹ *Maastricht Beleid* (2022). Kadernota 2022, Hoofdstuk 4: Grondbeleid (pp. 16-40). [Link](#)

³² CBS, *Regionale kerncijfers Nederland* (31 juli 2025).

³³ Looking at median standardized income, Maastricht is among the ten municipalities in the Netherlands with the lowest incomes. Therefore, we examine the property tax rates of these cities.

³⁴ CBS, *Regionale kerncijfers Nederland* (31 juli 2025).

- Volt wants to **tunnel the railway from the station towards Eijsden/Liège, up to and including the Bloemenweg level crossing**. This will free up a lot of space allowing for the removal of: (1) The Akerstraat and Scharnerweg car tunnels, (2) the level crossing at the Koepelkerk, and (3) the Bloemenweg level crossing. This initiative will end the division of the city caused by the railway, connecting West and East at ground level. A new square can be constructed at the Koepelkerk (*following, for example, Jo Coenen's plan*), and the Groene Loper can be extended parallel to the Bloemenweg towards the station.
- While Volt's primary goal is a tunnel beneath the tracks, the municipality must also **maintain a second scenario focused on building above the railway**. Although Volt strongly prefers a tunnel, the city must consider a plan where residential floors can be gradually constructed over the tracks.
- The new **'Limburg Centraal' rail zone strategy must be adapted to reflect this ambition**, enabling us to develop a clear vision for this new residential area in partnership with the Province.

3.4 A housing policy with more courage and creativity:

A liveable Maastricht requires courage and creativity in housing policy. Volt wants the municipality to provide space for **new forms of living and the smart use of vacant buildings and industrial heritage**. All of this must be done with a clear focus on affordability and social cohesion.

- Volt wants to stimulate a 'magic mix' of residential concepts, **where the elderly and students live together under one roof**. This promotes intergenerational contact, reduces loneliness, and makes studying in Maastricht more affordable³⁶. We use the Martinushuis in Wyck as inspiration for this³⁷.
- Volt wants the municipality to investigate whether a **Maastricht Municipal Housing Company** can help create social and owner-occupied housing more quickly and affordably. In this way, control over housing remains in public hands rather than being left entirely to the market.
- From factory site to vibrant neighbourhood: **The Sphinx site offers unique opportunities to create a vibrant urban district** where culture, incubators (such as the Landbouwbelang community), housing, and businesses complement one another. Volt wants the municipality to make zoning plans flexible, so that initiatives from creative entrepreneurs, makers, and local organisations can find space more easily. This will allow the site to grow into a dynamic new hub for Maastricht.
- Volt supports the municipality in **converting vacant office and retail properties into social housing** for sale and rent, an area where Maastricht is already performing well and must continue to do so³⁸. Volt prioritises the repurposing of vacant buildings, the development of residential space over retail, and high-rise construction on existing urban land. This allows Maastricht to grow within its borders, creating more space for greenery and reducing heat stress.
- Many homes in Maastricht are not fully utilised. By dividing underused living spaces or plots more intelligently, more people can find a home. However, current regulations regarding the subdivision of properties are often unclear and restrictive, discouraging residents and developers from using space efficiently. **The municipality must provide clear and flexible rules that allow for the division**

³⁵ According to Statistics Netherlands (CBS), Maastricht has an average WOZ value of €313,000. This represents an increase of €53. This includes rental properties. According to the municipal budget, the average WOZ value is €430,000. This represents an increase of €73. In that same municipal budget, €43.3 million will be raised through property tax in 2025. A 16.8% increase means €7.3 million. Real estate is very inelastic, so the actual revenues will not be much lower.

³⁶ Connect Generations. [Link](#)

³⁷ RO Groep. Martinushuis. [Link](#)

of unused living spaces and plots, without compromising the quality of life or allowing slum landlords to exploit the situation.

- Volt wants the municipality to focus actively on a 'flow-through' (downsizing) policy, enabling the elderly to move more easily to a suitable home. By investing in affordable, accessible senior housing and residential centres, larger homes can be freed up for young families and first-time buyers. **Building a well-designed senior complex could release dozens of traditional family homes. This allows seniors to live more comfortably and finally gives first-time buyers a chance to enter the housing market.** The municipality must collaborate with housing corporations and healthcare institutions to develop these options, improving mobility, enhancing quality of life, and combating loneliness among the elderly.

3.5 A proper home in Maastricht for caravan dwellers:

Maastricht, like many other municipalities, has a shortage of pitches for caravan residents³⁹. This has resulted in long waiting lists, putting a vital and vibrant local culture in our region at risk of disappearing. Volt believes that the right to housing for caravan dwellers is a human right, a view shared by the European Commission⁴⁰ and the European Court of Human Rights⁴¹. The municipality must therefore modernise existing sites, create space for new developments where possible, and establish a fair allocation system. Residents will be actively involved in the design of this policy.

3.6 A liveable Maastricht means a liveable South Limburg:

Volt does not view the housing crisis as a strictly Maastricht issue, but as a shared South Limburg challenge. That is why Volt wants **Maastricht to actively co-invest in affordable housing and student campuses in Sittard-Geleen and Parkstad**. This will alleviate housing pressure in Maastricht while bringing new vitality to other South Limburg municipalities; particularly in cities with higher vacancy rates, such as Heerlen and Kerkrade.

- Volt wants to **explore how Maastricht's resources can be deployed to accelerate housing construction in Sittard-Geleen and Parkstad**.
- Quality living in South Limburg also requires better travel connections. Currently, living in Sittard or Heerlen while studying in Maastricht is possible but impractical: trains run too infrequently and stop too early. Volt therefore wants the Province of Limburg, together with Maastricht, Parkstad, and Sittard-Geleen, **to develop a regional rail vision that provides more frequent, earlier, and later connections within South Limburg** (see also: *1.7 No Maastricht-Aachen Airport, but a Cologne-Brussels line*).
- Finally, Volt wants Maastricht to work together with **Maastricht University and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences to investigate how new faculties can be distributed more intelligently across**

38 *De Limburger* (2023). Maastricht is kampioen kantoren ombouwen tot woningen. [Link](#)

39 Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken (2018), *Beleidskader gemeentelijk woonwagen- en standplaatsbeleid*. [Link](#)

40 European Commission (2021), *EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation*. [Link](#)

41 European Court of Human Rights (2012). *Yordanova v. Bulgarije*. [Link](#)

the region, with Maastricht taking a leading role. This ensures that future housing pressure is distributed more evenly across the region.

3.7 A second home in Maastricht? Not right now...

In various cities across the Netherlands and Europe, homes are being purchased by people who do not live in them, using them instead as second homes or investments. This removes properties from the regular housing market and drives up prices for residents. Volt believes that homes are primarily intended for living in, not for profit. Therefore, Volt wants the municipality to **introduce a five-year owner-occupancy requirement for new-build homes**. While Volt would prefer a maximum of ten years, a five-year municipal residence requirement is currently the legal limit permitted nationwide. During this period, new homes may only be purchased by people who intend to live in them. This prevents properties from standing empty and keeps Maastricht liveable for those who truly want to make it their home.

3.8 Stricter purchase protection for homes:

Volt wants more housing to remain available for those who intend to live there themselves. Buy-to-let investors are driving up prices and disrupting the balance between temporary and permanent residents. While existing student housing has its value, further growth in this area primarily highlights the municipality's failure to build dedicated student apartments and housing campuses. **That is why Volt wants to expand purchase protection:** following the Amsterdam model, homes with a WOZ value (assessed value) of up to €533,000 may no longer be sold to investors for the purpose of renting them out. Volt remains open to increasing this purchase protection threshold further in the future.

3.9 Scaling the heights with Randwyck! Towards a Maastricht Strijp-S:

Volt wants Randwyck to become Maastricht's modern cityscape: a sustainable neighbourhood where living, working, and studying converge. Instead of expanding into the Heuvelland region—where we would have to sacrifice our unique natural environment for housing—we will build upwards in Randwyck. That is why Volt wants the municipality to **apply a different high-rise standard in Randwyck and other modern neighbourhoods situated away from the historic city centre**. This creates space between Wyck, the two railway stations, and the MECC for affordable apartments for first-time buyers, campus housing for students, green spaces, and recreational facilities, all in the spirit of Eindhoven's Strijp-S. The currently vacant spaces in Randwyck are intended to transform this area into a modern, green, and vibrant part of the city. This gives Maastricht a new calling card for those entering from the south: a city of renewal and greenery.

3.10 No Maastricht Aachen Airport, but a Maastricht Aachen Residential Area:

In addition to Volt's proposal to stop subsidising Maastricht Aachen Airport (see also: 1.7 No Maastricht-Aachen Airport, but a Cologne-Brussels line), **we want the airport to be converted into a residential area upon its closure.** While the airport is largely owned by the Province, we can exert pressure as a key stakeholder. The region will also need to engage in discussions with other major partners, such as Eurocontrol (the Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre, MUAC), which operates independently of the airport but is located on an adjacent site.

- As far as we are concerned, the main transit artery and express cycle route between Chemelot and our city will pass through the new Maastricht Aachen Residential Area. The airport site is already equipped with many essential amenities for a residential district, such as roads, sewerage, and utilities. **Through the South Limburg Cooperation Foundation, the municipalities of Maastricht and Beek could present a compelling blueprint for such a district to the Province.**



CHAPTER 4

**A SOLIDARITY-BASED
MAASTRICHT**

Across Europe, including Maastricht, the gap between rich and poor is growing. This puts enormous pressure on our society. **Volt therefore strives for a clear social policy with four core values: equal opportunities, strong financial security, accessible healthcare and social education.**

Maastricht is, after Enschede and Heerlen, the most segregated city in the Netherlands⁴². Wealthy and poor residents rarely meet. This not only increases inequality, but also mistrust and misunderstanding. **Closing this gap requires conscious desegregation in our urban development.** In short, this means building new neighborhoods in such a way that people from different economic classes move in, meet each other, and send their children to the same school. A second Céramique may sound appealing to some, but it will only further reinforce the divisions in the city.

Poverty isn't a choice. Showing solidarity with people in poverty is. Volt wants social policy based on trust in people instead of mistrust. The government often translates that solidarity into expensive measures that are just enough to prevent the worst, but don't help them get ahead in life. Solidarity is not a policy document or a political strategy: **solidarity is a way of living together.** And that way of living together is under pressure. Anyone who breaks down the walls between residents, between neighborhoods, between generations, and between incomes today will build a Maastricht of solidarity that offers space for encounters, support, and new opportunities. Let's trust each other again.

4.1 Reliable poverty policy:

Many people don't trust the municipality, partly because social policy changes too frequently. Annual adjustments—no matter how well-intentioned—often eliminate vital support systems for residents. For citizens to be able to rely on poverty policy, it must not only be simpler but also more reliable. **Social services depend on word of mouth**, especially in neighborhoods with high rates of functional illiteracy.

- Volt argues that, social experiments aside, **social benefits should be fixed for at least eight years (two municipal council terms)** and may not be replaced in the interim. It takes time before such provisions are actually widely used by the target group. This doesn't mean that the social domain can no longer innovate and renew, but that a specific social safety net, on which several citizens depend, should only be reconsidered after eight years.
- Volt wants residents who are on welfare to get **more room to earn extra money without immediately losing their benefits.** The municipality now says it wants to implement this on a customised basis, but that is not always applied in the same way. Volt wants this to be clearly established in policy, so that earning extra income isn't dependent on arbitrariness, but on fair and traceable policies.

⁴² *Binnenlands Bestuur*, Rijk en Arm Ontmoeten Elkaar Steeds Minder. [Link](#)

4.2 't Peske makes the Maastricht system more accessible:

A complex multitude of municipal regulations, each with its own requirements and assessments, puts considerable pressure on social security.

- Following the example of Utrecht's U-pass, The Hague's Ooievaarspas and the social Uitpas of Flanders and Brussels, Volt wants a similar arrangement in Maastricht under the name **'t Peske: a free social pass for Maastricht residents with a low income**, which makes it possible to participate in valuable activities for free or at a discount, such as playing sports, attending a concert or taking a course. This Peske also applies to the children of the pass holder and will be available both as a physical card and as an app.
- **Volt wants to ensure caregivers get a special place in this system.** Those who care intensively for another person reduce the burden on the care system and deserve appreciation. Therefore, informal caregivers who fall into a lower income category due to their care responsibilities may be more eligible for 't Peske⁴³.
- In chapter 6, *a Culturally Connecting Maastricht*, the added value 't Peske has for the culture and sports sector is explained further.

4.3 South Limburg social policy - within and outside education:

Volt wants Maastricht to take the lead in a new, preventative social policy for young people in South Limburg. Broad-based problems in our region, such as poverty, educational disadvantage, and health disparities, often begin at a young age. These challenges can only be solved by improving collaboration between healthcare, education, and municipalities in our region. That's why Volt advocates for **a strong social infrastructure for young South Limburgers**—in the classroom and beyond, with a focus on prevention and equal opportunities.

- Volt wants structurally **more money towards education**, with special attention to young families. We invest in the opportunities of the child so that the Maastricht residents of tomorrow can reap the benefits of a social city.
- The municipality must, together **with schools, address poverty signalling, a healthy lifestyle, language support and integration more actively.** Some of the investments in the social domain can be fully handled by schools, provided they receive the necessary funding. Maastricht UMC+ also has a significant role to play in promoting a healthy lifestyle in the region and should take a leading role in this regard.
- Volt wants Maastricht to take the lead in the establishment of Social Affairs South Limburg: an employment relationship that brings together preventive care and social services in the region⁴⁴.
- Volt wants support services to not have to wait until problems within families escalate, but rather to approach families early on with concrete support. This requires much more municipal support to **create space for preventive care within healthcare.** This often prevents expensive and complex care in the long term.

⁴³ For example, in this case we set the limit at 135% of the social minimum instead of 130%.

⁴⁴ The municipality must be more active in investigating, evaluating, and learning from instances where municipalities have withdrawn from previously agreed-upon joint arrangements, as happened to a number of municipalities at Sociale Zaken Maastricht-Heuvelland and Kredietbank Zuid-Limburg.

- By focusing more on preventive care and a data-supported social domain (see also: *4.5 The social domain must be data-supported*) it is possible that we will save money in the Social Domain. **Any money saved in this way, we'll reinvest in better youth care.** Youth care remains a large and important cost item in the social domain. As long as Maastricht remains one of the ten Dutch municipalities with the highest risk of poverty⁴⁶ and has an above-average number of young people in need of care⁴⁷, there is work to be done.
- Volt wants, where possible, to **move away from market forces in youth care** and is inspired by municipalities that opt for new, people-oriented working methods.
- The municipality will need to help schools make citizenship tangible, for example, through council visits and interactive projects. Council members and civil servants can be deployed for this purpose if requested.
- Read more about our policy for a future-proof city for young people in *Chapter 5 - A Young Maastricht*.

4.4 The Maastricht Living Room:

The municipality is often far removed from its residents, and often from the very residents who need it most. Volt therefore wants to move towards a radically more accessible social system; both in person and online:

- Each district must have a **"Maastricht Living Room"**. The new district managers are a good initiative, but many Maastricht residents still don't know where to find them. That's why we want to set up living rooms in existing community centers, where the district manager will be present on a fixed weekly day to have coffee with residents and help them find the right support. Such support can involve making the social safety nets and resources available in our city more visible, but can also include, for example, free advice on making a home more sustainable. (see also: 2.4).
- Volt wants to connect the district directors with healthcare coaches, who actively work with families to address challenges in their households.
- The living rooms are preferably located in neighborhoods with major social and economic challenges. **We want to actively collaborate with "social hubs"** – people who are real key figures in the neighbourhood – so that the municipality can respond more quickly and effectively to what is going on. It is therefore essential that the Living Rooms are part of a broader, integrated social web.
- Volt wants the municipality to use the Maastricht Livingroom **to provide structural support to citizen initiatives such as Buurtbalans, Burgerlab Maastricht and Maastricht Vitale Stad**. We encourage municipalities, institutions, and residents to jointly develop plans in neighborhood-focused dialogues, so that democracy is once again brought closer to people's lives.
- **Following the example of Heerlen, we would like to bring together as many different organisations as possible in the Living room.** Think of neighborhood service points, social organisations and officials from Social Affairs. But, residents only need to contact a single district director who will then guide them. This keeps things clear and accessible for everyone.

⁴⁵ Gemeente Maastricht, Begrotingsprogramma 2025. [Link](#)

⁴⁶ De Limburger, Minder mensen lopen kans op armoede, maar drie Limburgse gemeenten staan in de landelijke top 10. [Link](#)

⁴⁷ Maastricht Beleid, Uitvoeringsplan Jeugd. [Link](#)

- The *Living rooms* can support residents in various ways by illuminating the options the municipality already offers, but which are not sufficiently known to many citizens, such as **the help of an energy coach who provides free advice on making your home more sustainable**.
- Volt also wants to investigate the possibility of implementing this in every district **to create accessible places where residents can go in case of emergency**, such as in the event of a flood or failure of essential systems. The Living rooms could be equipped for this, and can therefore play a vital role when emergency services can't arrive quickly enough. This can be done physically by managing supplies of basic necessities, but also organisationally by using these meeting places to recruit and train volunteers who can temporarily support residents until regular assistance arrives.

4.5 The social domain must be data-supported:

Municipalities can better inform their social policies if they are supported by data. For example, if the number of youth care applications in a particular neighborhood increases, the municipality can implement targeted and integrated preventive support in that specific neighborhood. **In this way, we are moving from an old system based on assumptions to a new system based on clear trends and signals.** In this way, resources are used more efficiently, because capacity and deployment are better aligned with actual needs for certain types of care.

- **This strengthens cooperation between partners.** When civil servants and healthcare providers all use the same dashboard for social affairs, they have a complete and shared picture of the situation as well. This makes consultations more efficient, effective, and better tailored to residents' needs.
- A data-supported social domain also ensures policy choices that are more transparent and more justifiable, both to politics and citizens, which can ultimately lead to **more confidence in the municipality and the political system of Maastricht**.
- Renewal and sustainability of the social domain will lead to lower costs. Volt emphasises that, as long as social problems in Maastricht remain high, **any savings as a result of a more sustainable social domain must immediately flow back** to the same social domain. After all, savings in the social domain should result in more targeted care, not indirect cuts.
- Volt wants **civil servants to work in integral city teams more often**, across domain boundaries and together with residents, researchers and social partners.
- Volt wants Maastricht to revive the principles of Blue Care: integrated cooperation between care, welfare and prevention as a central approach of the municipality, **with happiness and health as guiding goals**; not just lower healthcare costs.

4.6 Learn from Europe! Bring the Healthcare Coach to Maastricht:

The British *KeyRing*-method⁴⁸, the Amsterdam *Household Coach pilots*⁴⁹, the Rhineland *Haushalts Organisations Training*⁵⁰ and the Brussels *Aide à domicile*⁵¹. These are all different forms of care which

48 Keyring Support Networks: [Link](#)

49 Nautus: [Link](#)

50 Caritas, HaushaltsOrganisationsTraining (HOT): [Link](#)

51 CPAS, Aide à Domicile: [Link](#)

are based on the same method. The local government actively focuses on practical guidance in and around the household, with an emphasis on promoting independence and being a part of wider networks.

- Volt wants the municipality to **research the best European examples for household and healthcare coaches** and to determine to what extent these are applicable to South Limburg. The most suitable method will then be implemented.
- Although not exactly the same, Volt wants the municipality to learn more from the Maastricht healthcare broker Pallium Portam. They are currently working with **small circles, where one circle of caregivers takes care of everything for a number of elderly people**. Volt is curious to what extent these small-scale care networks are applicable outside elderly care as well.

4.7 Free families from debt, increase their chances:

Volt wants Maastricht to learn from the experiments conducted in Sittard-Geleen, Arnhem, and Roermond, where the municipality assumed the debts of dozens of families with children (Sittard-Geleen) or bought them out (Arnhem, Roermond). After all, if Sittard-Geleen deemed it necessary, then the same certainly applies to Maastricht: the average income there is even lower than there, and in our city there's 45 families with problematic debts⁵².

- Maastricht doesn't need to reinvent the wheel. There are plenty of examples of such projects. We want the municipality to investigate these projects and, based on the findings, start our own project.
- In addition, Volt wants our municipality, just like in the previously mentioned cities, to limit itself to **three target groups that benefit most from this care**: families affected by an unfortunate life event, families living on social assistance, and families who have little control over their own spending patterns due to low impulse control. We focus on families with children, because children are incredibly vulnerable through no fault of their own, through, for example, social problems or problems at school.

4.8 Unequal opportunities due to functional illiteracy:

According to a 2018 survey, approximately 17,000 Maastricht residents have functional illiteracy. That's 14% of the adult population⁵³. Because of the shame that comes with it, many residents struggling with functional illiteracy keep it to themselves. As a result, many social service providers have little experience with the topic.

- Volt wants the municipality to **talk with school boards from Vista, Zuyd and UM to include the topic of functional illiteracy in the curriculum of relevant study programmes**. For example, consider the study programme social work, the PABO, but also broad academic research programmes at the UM Faculty of Social Sciences (FASoS).

⁵² *Gemeente Maastricht*, Financiële Risico's "Klarna-Generatie" en Plek Thema Nieuwe Armoedebelid. [Link](#)
⁵³ *Koraal* (2018) Gemeente Maastricht past brieven aan voor mensen met lees- en leerproblemen. [Link](#)

- Many initiatives are already being set up in our municipality to help people with functional illiteracy. The Centre Céramique and the Vista College have such projects. Volt wants the municipality to stimulate such projects and to increase the scale.
- The aforementioned **Maastricht living rooms should become an important meeting place** for residents who can then be referred to a course for people with functional illiteracy.
- The municipality must also facilitate more in **combating digital illiteracy**.

4.9 Provide an integral healthcare waitinglist:

About 1,200 Maastricht residents are on the waiting list for domestic help. With the aging population and shortages in healthcare in mind, that waiting list will not decrease anytime soon. The Municipality of Best was able to **shorten the waitinglist by almost 70% by putting all home care providers on one integrated and interactive list**⁵⁴. Volt wants the municipality of Maastricht to follow this successful example by choosing a similar approach.

⁵⁴ *Zorg Inzicht* (2025). Pilot Gemeente Best. [Link](#)

CHAPTER 5



A YOUNG MAASTRICHT

In almost all of Europe, the ageing of the population continues. **In Maastricht the population is aging even faster than the national average:** more than one in five Maastricht residents are now over 65 years old⁵⁵. Our municipality is often coloured green on population maps, but that is a fata morgana: the share of young people is growing mainly thanks to students who often stay in the city only temporarily⁵⁶.

The aging population has significant consequences for our region. In South Limburg, primary schools are closing, secondary schools are merging, and organizations are facing increasing staff shortages. **This is also a problem for the elderly:** due to the shortage of young healthcare staff, fewer and fewer people are receiving the care they need.

Maastricht is therefore facing an existential challenge: **How does the city remain attractive to young people and families?** How do we ensure that talent stays after graduation, and how do we better connect education with the labour market?

Volt wants a **new education policy** in which cooperation and equal opportunities are central: with language courses for newcomers, social youth care, accessible schools and fitting Euregional education. We can only keep Maastricht attractive if we maintain a balance between vibrancy and quality of life. Volt strives for a vibrant, livable city for young Maastricht residents. **In this chapter we will explain our Plan for the New Maastrichtian.**

5.1 Keep the schools in West Maastricht!

Volt believes that good education should be accessible to all Maastricht residents. Therefore, we are disappointed in the municipal government's decision to concentrate all practical education in one large school community in East Maastricht. This means that the west of the city loses accessible practical education, as the municipality places a strong emphasis on large-scale education. This is despite the fact that small-scale education is precisely what's essential for equal opportunities and proper, tailored solutions according to the ARVO advisory report⁵⁷. Volt endorses this principle: **no learning factory, but distributed school communities.**

- Volt advocates a **future-proof VMBO campus in West Maastricht**, which guarantees quality, accessibility and equal opportunities for young people.
- At the moment, the municipality appears to be reaching its financial limits within the so-called Integrated Housing Plan 2025–2040: the budget intended for school communities. Volt therefore wants to **have extensive research done that puts various educational scenarios on the table** and points out which funds should be used occasionally or structurally to achieve these scenario's.

⁵⁵ *Alle cijfers (2025)* [Link](#)

⁵⁶ *Alle cijfers (2025)* [Link](#)

⁵⁷ *Stichting LVO, rapport Commissie ARVO 2040.* [Link](#)

- If more expensive scenarios are unfeasible, Volt believes that the municipality should at least support the scenario **in which the existing practice location of Terra Nigra in West Maastricht is retained and strengthened**. This location can then develop into a fully-fledged educational center within a city-wide school community, so that there will also be room for practical education on the west side. This way, there will still be a possibility to further expand this school community in the future if the demand for it grows.

5.2 Learning Dutch? That should be free!

As far as Volt is concerned, it is inexplicable that our city and region are experiencing a historic labour shortage, but also the lowest stay rate of graduates. Only 11.6% of them stay in Maastricht⁵⁸. By comparison, that figure is 48.9% in the Eindhoven region. Although Eindhoven, with Brainport, naturally faces a unique economic situation, the municipality also does a great deal to attract international students. As a student in Eindhoven, you can learn Dutch for free at any level. This should also be possible in Maastricht. **Learning the Dutch language is the key to keeping talented young people in our region**. Volt therefore wants the municipality of Maastricht to sit down with the University to jointly invest significantly in the UM Language Center.

- At the moment, as a student you only receive one course package for free and it costs you more than 1000 euros⁵⁹ to speak enough Dutch for everyday life⁶⁰. Volt wants the municipality to pay half of this 1000 euros and to require the UM to cover the other half. This will amount to an annual investment by the municipality of 0.3 to 0.5 million euros⁶¹. In this way, just like in Eindhoven and Enschede, we can start to offer free Dutch language courses in English and German to international students.
- Volt finds it inexplicable that ECTS credits awarded by the Language Center for Dutch language courses are often not recognised. **The municipality may have to apply pressure on the university to make recognition of these credits possible**.
- Wherever possible, we want to **cover the costs of French and German language education as much as possible for students**. We hope this will eliminate the language barrier for future cross-border workers.
- **This way, we can retain foreign students, young asylum seekers and other newcomers who are learning Dutch to the labor market in Maastricht and the region**. This is one step to counteract the ageing and shrinking population.

5.3 Make learning Limburgish attractive:

Many residents would like to learn Maastrichtian Limburgish, but rarely get the chance. When they do try, they're often not taken seriously. To preserve our unique European regional language for future generations, Volt wants to make learning (Maastrichtian) Limburgish much more appealing:

⁵⁸ Nuffic (2025).

⁵⁹ This could be "well over €1000." It costs €600 for German speakers, €1200 for English speakers to reach B1. Up to A1 is free. After that, you have to complete A2min, A2, B1min, and B1, at a cost of €300 per module. For German speakers, up to A2 is free, so only B1min and B1 are required.

⁶⁰ This concerns the so-called B1 level – an EU reference framework that establishes that B1 is sufficient to function in our society. [Link](#)

- The municipality will, in collaboration with Veldeke and Hoes veur 't Limbörgs, **offer accessible and affordable Limburgish courses in the city**. The municipality is responsible for covering part of the costs. Where possible, we should cooperate with the Province of Limburg and make use of European funds.
- **Courses should be offered at least for beginners, but also for passive speakers**. Especially among the younger generation of Maastricht residents, we see many people who have a passive command of the language but lack the courage to speak it publicly. Refresher courses should be available for them as well.
- Much Limburgish knowledge is lost in childcare. **Volt believes it is important that even the youngest Maastricht residents come into contact with our regional language**, so they maintain a strong connection to our city. Research has shown that multilingual childcare has enormous benefits for a growing child's developing concentration, working memory, and language sensitivity⁶².
- Where possible, Volt wants the municipality to invest in **more digital possibilities for the language**—also for use in education.
- Volt is an advocate for **actively addressing our Limburgish language and the history of schools in our European border region**. Too often, school textbooks only focus on the national history canon (see also: *8.4 An inclusive Maastricht is a proud Maastricht*).

5.4 One South Limburg education network for the future:

South Limburg shares the same challenges and opportunities for the future. We run the risk of remaining a remote Dutch region, but we have the potential to be the beating heart of Europe. **To invest in that European heart, South Limburg needs one central educational network.**

- The municipality must **develop a stronger culture of cooperation with South Limburg educational institutions**. Maastricht can become the hub of the regional educational landscape. Volt wants the municipality to connect higher and primary education more closely with partners such as youth care, libraries, sports and cultural institutions, childcare, and initiatives such as *Healthy Primary Schools of the Future*. This creates a cohesive network that is committed to the future of young Maastricht residents.
- There must be an **Alderman for Education, Culture and Science (OCW)**, following The Hague's model. In this way, we ensure that the cultural sector, investments in our education system, and our regional economic vision are more deeply intertwined.
- Volt wants the similar aldermen from Parkstad and Sittard-Geleen to meet every quarter with the Maastricht OCW alderman to, in collaboration with Vista, Zuyd, UM and Brightlands to determine and evaluate the **short- and long-term goals of the South Limburg Education Network**.
- Following the Maastricht Student&Stad initiative, Volt wants to organise an annual conference in the city hall, bringing together all the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) aldermen from the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, representatives from Brightlands, and associated Euregional

⁶¹ Based on figures from Maastricht University (2024–2025), the city has 23,324 students, approximately 14,200 of whom are from abroad. Approximately 1,200 students take Dutch language courses annually. The average cost per course is €300, half of which (€150) is covered by the municipality. Because non-German-speaking students need four courses to progress from A1 to B1, and German speakers usually need two, the municipal contribution amounts to approximately €510,000 per year. By shortening the program (as in Groningen, where three modules are sufficient) and allowing German speakers to take only one module, this amount could be reduced to approximately €330,000 per year. Low administrative costs, comparable to those in Enschede (€25) or Groningen (€50), could further reduce the municipal contribution by an additional 8 to 17%.

⁶² Hoes veur 't Limbörgs (2025). Voorschools educatie. [Link](#)

knowledge institutions and companies. This **annual Smart Meuse-Rhine event** will be a first step towards a close, personal and confidential Euregional network that, in the long term, can form a serious European fist in the knowledge economy of the 21st century (*an Innovative Maastricht*).

- The already existing **Talent Retail Academy of UM, Zuyd, Fontys, Vista and South Limburg SMEs must pursue closer cooperation** and, where necessary, must be better facilitated by the municipality. According to Volt, this can be achieved primarily by meeting more frequently. For example, the Local Education Agenda will have to be coordinated at least biennially, instead of the current annual schedule. The Agreement-Oriented Consultation will take place annually instead of the current four-yearly schedule.
- The recently established **Municipal Council-University Council working group must be expanded to include Zuyd and Vista**, so that it becomes a full-fledged representation of young and political Maastricht.

5.5 Euregional talent for the future:

Maastricht must become the place where young talent develops, transcends borders, and helps shape the future of South Limburg. Volt wants the municipality to collaborate more closely with educational institutions and employers to better guide young people, newcomers, and cross-border workers toward employment, education, and further training: both within the Netherlands and abroad. We want to leverage existing successful initiatives such as *Welcome to Maastricht Region*⁶³.

- Volt wants the municipality to **invest more in Euregional training**, through cross-border training, further training programs, and language instruction in Dutch, French, and German. This way, we increase the opportunities for Limburgers and other Europeans in our shared Euregional labour market. Volt is, just as with Dutch language courses (see also: *5.2 Learning Dutch? That should be free!*), committed to the recognition of credits for French and German language courses by the university.
- In collaboration with the educational institutions in our region (such as UM, Zuyd, Vista, the Alliance Française and Sprachwerk Aachen) we want to invest in **Dutch, French and German language courses that are, when possible, free of charge for Maastricht residents on a low income**.
- The municipality will also have to look into the possibility of **border region-related programmes**. To be developed in collaboration with UM, Zuyd University, and Vista. Existing European and Euregional subsidy programs, such as Interreg, will need to be used much more extensively than they are now to strengthen educational institutions in the Euregion, in collaboration with the municipality.
- Some UM programs, such as European Studies and European Law, are potentially well-suited to the needs of our border region, but currently focus almost exclusively on Europe in the broadest sense and hardly on the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. **New cross-border initiatives, such as the possibility of tri-national education in the Euregion (following one study at five Euregional universities), should be supported as much as possible by the government.**

⁶³ Welcome to the Maastricht Region: [Link](#)

- We want the municipality to enter into discussions with UM to ensure that the municipality plays a much more active role in the introductory weeks at the faculties. **The municipality and relevant partners should be given more space during these introductory weeks to guide students in their new city.** Consider a “Safe in the City” course where new students, regardless of their nationality, learn how to move safely through the city (see also: *1.3 The pedestrian is king, the cyclist is prince*), but also a presentation on the long-term benefits of learning Dutch, or a series of lectures that point students to job opportunities in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion that are relevant to their studies. This way, we ensure that more first-year students start thinking about a possible future in the region right from the start.
- Volt wants to honor the Maastricht-Liège inventor J.P. Minckelers by **setting up a Minckelers-traineeship, in which Zuyd and UM alumni work in a South Limburg sector for six months and another six months at the municipality.** This way, they get to know the region inside and out and bring fresh ideas to government and businesses. The municipality is funding and mentoring the first five participants, with the goal of structurally attracting more young professionals to the region. Volt wants this traineeship to grow into a permanent programme in which dozens of graduates participate annually: the new generation of a future-oriented, European South Limburg.

5.6 *The Plan for the New Maastrichtian:*

Maastricht is facing a shortage of young Maastricht residents who want to stay. Volt therefore wants a clear, comprehensive vision document to be drawn up outlining **how we make the city more attractive for children, young people and young (potential) families:** an integral *Plan for the New Maastrichtian*.

- Volt wants new policies to always be considered holistically to determine the impact that choices can have on the interests of the *New Maastrichtian*.
- Policy will now be assessed based on its effects on young families, young Maastricht residents, and children. Will a policy improve their lives, keep it neutral or worsen it? This may concern the vibrancy of the city – for example, the preservation of cultural havens such as Landbouwbelang – but also safety in neighbourhoods, such as better school routes, or health and social care, such as appropriate youth care (see also: *4.3 South Limburg social policy - within and outside education*).

CHAPTER 6

**A CULTURALLY CONNECTING
MAASTRICHT**



Maastricht requires far stronger connections, both among its residents and with the wider region.

Strengthening the bonds between Maastrichtians is essential to bridging the high levels of segregation in our city and reducing the significant number of residents experiencing loneliness.⁶⁴

This unifying force goes beyond mere socialising; building relationships on sports fields, in community centres, and at cultural events lays the foundation for a resilient local community.

Culture, the arts, sports, and recreation form the bedrock of a solidary and democratic Maastricht. The challenges rooted in the social domain and the broader societal issues facing our city must therefore be more closely interwoven with the energy within our cultural and sports sectors. Maastricht often styles itself as the 'second cultural city' of the Netherlands⁶⁵. However, the reality tells a different story: we currently spend less on culture than Heerlen, and there are seven other Dutch cultural cities that invest more in the sector than we do. Volt believes it is time to match our ambitions with actual investment⁶⁶.

To thrive as a border city, Maastricht must connect more deeply with South Limburg and the Meuse–Rhine Euregion. Culture, the arts, and sports provide the informal, human connections that are often missing in our border region today. **Volt advocates for a new Euregional approach to the cultural sector**, where connecting our European region becomes a central pillar of Maastricht's cultural vision.

To realise this Euregional ambition, our city must invest heavily in culture and sports. As one of the strongest tourist brands in the Netherlands, Maastricht can afford to do so⁶⁷. Revenues generated from tourism can be utilised far more effectively by reinvesting them directly into our local sports and cultural sectors. In this way, the visitors of today help build the social fabric for the residents of tomorrow.

6.1 A clear vision for Maastricht's culture and sport:

Maastricht is brimming with visions and ambitions, yet these often lack definitive choices. The current cultural vision, for instance, remains vague about the *type* of cultural city we aspire to be, beyond the broad cliché of being "a city for everyone." **For Volt, the choice is clear: our vision for sport and culture must be centred on connection.**

- First and foremost, culture and sport should create connections between residents and groups that currently have far too little contact with one another. **Culture and sport are the 'social cement' that counteracts segregation between rich and poor, reduces distances between neighbourhoods, and bridges the divides within our society.** Many arts and cultural initiatives are already committed to this goal, such as the *Buurtopera* (Neighbourhood Opera), our city's various choirs, dance companies, brass bands, the *Buurttheater* (Neighbourhood Theatre), the *Student Theatre Group*, and

⁶⁴ GGD Zuid-Limburg, *Eenzaamheid bij Volwassenen* (2025). [Link](#)

⁶⁵ *Holland.com*, *Ontdek Maastricht*. [Link](#)

⁶⁶ *De Limburger* (2024), *Waarom Maastricht zichzelf toch promoot als tweede cultuurstad van het land*. [Link](#)

⁶⁷ *De Nieuwe Ster*, *Maastricht officieel het sterkste stadsmerk van Nederland* (2025). [Link](#)

Tuna de Maastricht. These essential meeting places are also forged through sport, for example at local sports clubs and during major sporting events such as *Zweit veur Leid*. The municipality must continue to facilitate these initiatives while also thinking critically: how can we reach even more people across different neighbourhoods? How can we connect population groups and generations that would otherwise never meet?

- Volt wants to counter the looming “*Nutella economy*”, where shops and restaurants offer little or nothing for local residents and focus almost entirely on quick tourist visits. Instead, we aim to **stimulate accessible alternatives that foster genuine encounters, creativity, and well-being for the people who actually live here.**
- **Volt wants the municipality to provide institutions with greater financial scope to involve Euregional partners audiences.** Prestigious institutions such as Marres, the Dutch Dance Festival, Oxygen, Toneelgroep Maastricht, Bonnefanten, PhilZuid, and Muziekgieterij already put our city on the map in Europe. However, they can play an even more significant role in strengthening Euregional connections and integration. Limburg (NL/BE), Aachen and Liège are vital bases for our city and its cultural offerings. This cross-border collaboration ensures that Maastricht truly positions itself as a European city, allowing us to distinguish ourselves from other cultural hubs in the Netherlands, like Eindhoven or Amsterdam.

6.2 More money for arts, culture and sports:

Maastricht identifies as the second-ranking cultural city in the Netherlands⁶⁸ and stands as the country’s most powerful city brand for visitors⁶⁹. This allows the municipality to structure its culture and sports budget around two key principles. First, our cultural sector has the potential to play an important role in addressing the city’s broader challenges, such as inequality, poverty, education, and civic participation. Second, visitors are so enthusiastic about Maastricht that they are willing to go to great lengths to visit; we should capitalise on this demand. Based on these two principles, Volt proposes the following:

- We are setting a major ambition as a target. Currently, the sports and culture sector costs the municipality €44 million per year⁷⁰. **Volt believes this budget should be doubled in the long term.** A significant portion of this increase will be used in an integrated way to tackle social and societal challenges.
- The municipality of Maastricht currently collects €7 million per year in tourist tax. For the strongest city brand in the Netherlands, this is insufficient. Given the high demand for our city, we intend to double the tourist tax. **This additional €7 million in tourism revenue would allow for an immediate 10.5% increase in the sports and culture budget⁷¹.** When factoring in the annual revenues generated by the sector itself, this €7 million could represent a total boost of 15.9%. This is a strong first step.
- Moreover, **a robust cultural sector, attracts a different kind of visitor.** Instead of day shoppers, we aim to attract sustainable cultural visitors who stay longer in hotels, spend more at local restaurants, and support a wider array of local initiatives and businesses in the city (*read also: an*

⁶⁸ *Holland.com*, Ontdek Maastricht. [Link](#)

⁶⁹ *De Nieuwe Ster*, Maastricht officieel het sterkste stadsmerk van Nederland. [Link](#)

⁷⁰ In 2025, the expenses were 54.8 million euros and the revenues 10.9 million euros.

⁷¹ The 10.5% figure is based on the culture and sports budget excluding revenues (€7 million out of €54.8 million), while the 15.9% figure is based on revenues from 2025 (€7 million out of €44 million). The municipality is expected to commit to a structural increase of €3 million in 2026. This commitment, combined with our plan, could even result in a 14.5% increase.

Innovative Maastricht). Volt views tourism as a primary strength for Maastricht, but we want to fortify the city rather than overwhelm it. We strive for a tourism sector that sustainably benefits local businesses and contributes to a liveable city for everyone.

- By significantly increasing the sports and culture budget, **we provide greater stability and predictability for our cultural partners**. Currently, many institutions hesitate to make essential long-term investments due to financial uncertainty.
- In addition, the new financial space created within the cultural budget will offer significantly **more opportunities for cultural creators and sports initiatives to develop new ideas from the bottom up**. Many young cultural creators currently indicate that there is insufficient financial leeway and that a large share of the budget is already allocated to existing cultural and sports partners. We therefore want to focus on a clearer budgetary separation between funding for key established partners and the creation of space for new initiatives.

6.3 Culture and sport as a foundation for a Maastricht of solidarity:

Without culture and sports, there are no accessible meeting places in our city. And without meeting places, there can be no supportive society or healthy democracy. Volt therefore wants **existing and new sports and cultural projects in Maastricht to commit themselves to connecting groups and to making important social issues a subject of discussion**.

- The significant increase in **the culture and sports budget in Maastricht can be used in part to address the city's integrated challenges** by linking it more closely to other community goals. This includes connecting cultural events to youth care, deploying cultural and sports activities in support of public health, and using cultural and sports initiatives for young people as a preventive approach to youth crime⁷².
- Volt wants to introduce a social city pass in Maastricht: *'t Peske* (see also 4.2 *'t Peske makes the Maastricht system more accessible*). **This pass, intended for residents with a limited budget, should also function as a culture and sports pass**, providing Maastricht residents with discounted access to cultural institutions and sports clubs.
- Swimming skills among children are declining⁷¹. **Volt wants every child in Maastricht to have access to swimming lessons**, without financial barriers for parents. The municipality should play a facilitating role in this and work with the province, primary schools, and sports clubs to explore how this can be achieved financially.

6.4 MVV as Maastricht's ultimate community centre:

Volt sees MVV as an opportunity to become a meeting point for the diverse and inclusive city of Maastricht. **That is why we support plans to provide our football club with a new home**, either through a thorough renovation of the Geusselt Stadium or through the construction of a new stadium. Both options deserve serious consideration, provided they offer clear social added value. At the same time,

⁷² *Programmabegroting Maastricht 2025* (2025). [Link](#)

⁷³ NOS (2023). Aantal kinderen zonder zwemdiploma neemt nog steeds toe. [Link](#)

Volt emphasises that the stadium must become a social heart of the city: a place where football meets culture, education, healthcare, and employment. The municipality can facilitate this by guaranteeing the loan MVV would take out for the new stadium or the renovation of the Geusselt Stadium. In doing so, the municipality must present a clear vision in which MVV and the stadium strengthen the club's public and social role. MVV can draw inspiration from examples such as PSV, Standard Liège, and Roda JC, where sport and society go hand in hand.

6.5 Save Landbouwbelang (LBB)

Volt supports the continuation of the cultural and social initiatives of Landbouwbelang (LBB). Providing housing for this community is essential to preserving this cultural haven.

- Now that the current plans for construction at the LBB complex are permanent, Maastricht will need to commit to finding a new location for the LBB initiatives. These initiatives are difficult to separate when it comes to housing, as they form part of a broader ecosystem. **We should therefore seize every opportunity to accommodate as much of this ecosystem as possible in a single location.** The LBB community must be proactively involved in this process.
- As far as Volt is concerned, a **structural budget should be allocated to cover rent and insulation costs.** This budget will help safeguard our city's cultural free haven. The municipality must recognise and protect the importance of an autonomous LBB community, as Maastricht risks losing vitality at the fringes of its cultural offering. The influx of art academy students into these cultural free havens and the invaluable contribution that LBB makes to the city's nightlife illustrate this clearly.

6.6 A new nightlife for Maastricht:

In Maastricht, there have been unused night permits available for years that are not taken up by entrepreneurs. While many people want a vibrant nightlife, few businesses are willing to stay open after 2 a.m. Volt sees an opportunity for the municipality to make it more attractive for entrepreneurs to make use of these unused permits.

- **The municipality can support existing night bars on the Markt and connect them with partners that attract new audiences.** This could include a techno night with Muziekgieterij, a jazz night with JekerJazz, a theatre or comedy night with local companies, or an "Uitkom" night with UM and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences at the end of the academic year. In this way, we help make nightlife more diverse, inclusive, and dynamic – and perhaps even more attractive to new entrepreneurs in the long term.
- In addition, safety during the night must be improved. Especially for women, Maastricht's nightlife is not always a pleasant experience. **Volt wants to actively involve hospitality staff and entrepreneurs in creating a safer culture for women.** This will be done by facilitating active

bystander training for hospitality staff, among others, and by organising educational and information sessions with experts. Perceived safety should be assessed annually and measured through surveys, interviews, and focus groups involving nightlife visitors, hospitality staff, business owners, and other stakeholders. Based on these findings, the approach to creating a safe nightlife will be refined every year.

- Volt wants the municipality **to work together with the police to examine whether night shifts can be scheduled more flexibly**. This would ensure that there is sufficient police presence during critical hours, particularly around closing time between 4:00 and 5:00 a.m., when many officers currently change shifts.

6.7 Bring cultural incubators closer to the neighbourhood

Volt wants the municipality to learn from the past. On the one hand, public spaces have been allowed to deteriorate under excessive neoliberalism. On the other hand, we must also acknowledge that an overly dominant role for government does not always achieve the desired results. Instead, Volt wants public spaces to grow organically into dynamic places of meeting and connection, where residents themselves give meaning to what is happening in their neighbourhood.

- Volt wants **libraries, community centres, and other municipal buildings to become cultural breeding grounds** where culture, sport, and entrepreneurship come together. Initiatives such as those of *Cultuurmakers Maastricht* are a great example⁷⁴.
- **Community centres and libraries will remain the property of the city and existing organisations**, but will be partially made available to local creators, associations, and entrepreneurs. This will create affordable workspaces, rehearsal spaces, exhibition venues, and hospitality facilities that stimulate vibrancy at the neighbourhood level. See also the next chapter: *An Innovative Maastricht*.
- The municipality takes an active role in safeguarding the guiding principle for public spaces: **they must always contribute to connections within neighbourhoods, across the city, and throughout the region**.
- The library plays a central role in our society⁷⁵. **Libraries should therefore receive sufficient financial support** to facilitate integrated initiatives in education, healthcare, and the cultural sector. Here too, lessons can be learned from existing initiatives, such as *Cultuurmakers Maastricht*⁷⁶.

6.8 Culture as concrete to unify the European border region:

South Limburg and the Meuse–Rhine Euregion are still by and large separate islands. **Cultural cooperation can provide the necessary cement to bring the Meuse–Rhine Euregion closer together**. Volt therefore presents a series of plans to open a new chapter in cultural cooperation within the Meuse–Rhine Euregion.

⁷⁴ *Cultuurmakers Maastricht* (2025). [Link](#)

⁷⁵ *Bibliothekenetwerk* (2025). De Maatschappelijke Waarde en Effecten van Bibliotheken. [Link](#)

⁷⁶ *Cultuurmakers Maastricht* (2025). [Link](#)

- Volt wants to **link cultural subsidies to Euregional cooperation**. This can already be achieved by connecting museums to annual cross-border school trips, by bringing together cultural partners in intercultural and multilingual festivals, by facilitating educational programmes for all ages, and by encouraging neighbourhood initiatives that promote social interaction among residents.
- To make cultural institutions accessible to all children in Maastricht, Volt wants to explore the possibility of **introducing a cultural bus for schoolchildren**, connecting schools in Maastricht with museums and other cultural meeting places in South Limburg and the Euregion.
- The municipality must **revive the Euregional Museum Card**. The completed pilot between Parkstad and Aachen, as well as the ongoing pilot between Venlo and its border region, should serve as inspiration for Maastricht to revive this earlier initiative. Potential partners, such as Parkstad, Sittard-Geleen, Aachen, and Liège, should be actively involved⁷⁷.
- Volt wants Maastricht, together with Sittard-Geleen and Heerlen, to take the lead in developing a **clear Euregional cultural vision, in close collaboration with partners in Belgium and Germany**. Where do we want to be in five, ten, or forty years? How do our cities complement one another? How can we ensure a self-sufficient and distinctive cultural offering that strengthens the region's position within the Dutch and European cultural landscape? Volt believes this vision should include putting Heerlen forward as a candidate for a future European Capital of Culture.
- **Volt wants to follow the example of the Maastricht initiative Student & Stad by organising an annual conference at City Hall**. At this conference, aldermen ("Wethouders" or Council Executives) for Education, Culture, and Science from across the Meuse–Rhine Euregion will come together with representatives from Brightlands and affiliated Euregional knowledge institutions and businesses. This annual Smart Meuse–Rhine event will be a first step towards building a close, personal, and confidential Euregional network that can, in the long term, develop into a serious European force within the knowledge economy of the 21st century (see also 5.4 *One South Limburg education network for the future* and 10.1 *Maastricht is a European city*).
- Volt has a clear long-term vision: a **Meuse–Rhine Cultural Fund** for film, music, dance, literature, visual arts, and other cultural initiatives. We advocate establishing this fund in the future together with partners from Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, as a driving force for cross-border collaboration and as a stimulus for the unique cultural industry that our region has the potential to develop.

6.9 Act as a university city - also in the cultural sector:

The university and the municipality have recently jointly explored how the Bonbonnière can be revitalised as a centre for culture, knowledge, and community. The municipality has already committed a substantial investment to the revitalisation of the Bonbonnière⁷⁸. Volt supports this decision, but also emphasises that **the municipality should, as much as possible, carry out such large projects in close cooperation with the major partners of our university city**.

⁷⁷ *De Limburger* (2023). De Euregionale Museumkaart. [Link](#)

⁷⁸ *De Nieuwe Ster* (2025). UM en stad betalen. [Link](#)

VERKIEZINGSPROGRAMMA

Volt Maastricht

- The Bonbonnière must not remain an isolated project, but should mark the beginning of a broader collaboration between the municipality, the university, and universities of applied sciences. A true university city works in close partnership with its leading knowledge institutions. Volt therefore wants the university council–municipal council working group to prioritise culture and to actively involve Zuyd University of Applied Sciences and Vista in this dialogue.



CHAPTER 7

AN INNOVATIVE MAASTRICHT

VERKIEZINGSPROGRAMMA Volt Maastricht

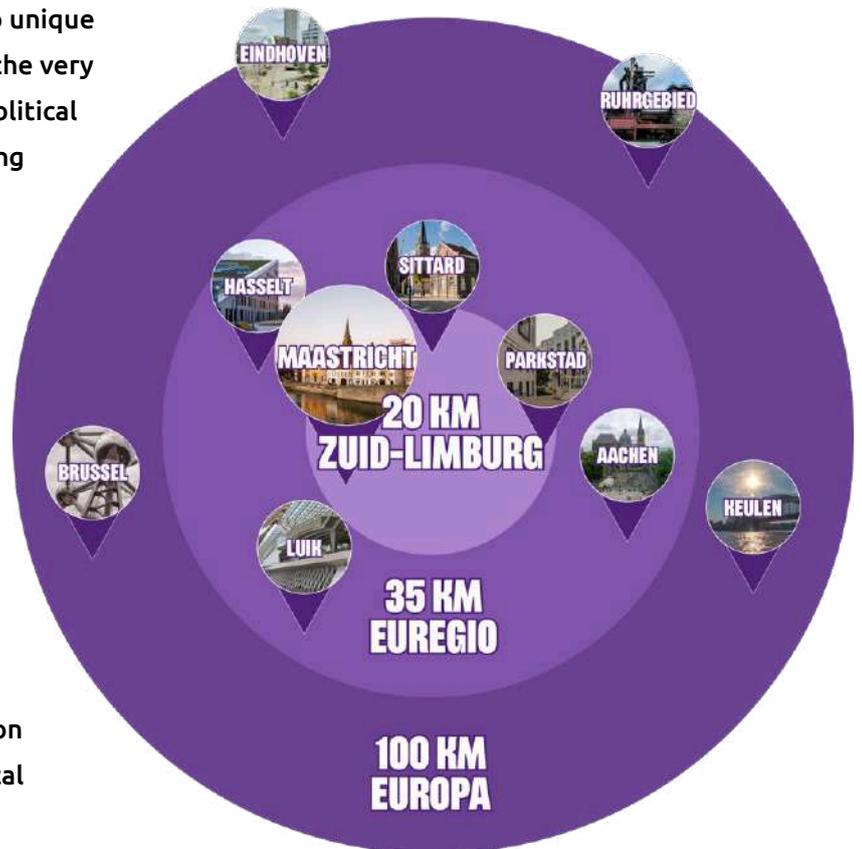
Maastricht faces major challenges, but also unique opportunities. Our city is situated right at the very intersection of Brainport Eindhoven, the political influence of Brussels, and the manufacturing industry of the German Ruhr area. **This is a unique location in the economic heart of Europe.** Volt wants Maastricht to utilise this position far more effectively and evolve into an innovative and economically attractive centre in the Meuse-Rhine Euregio.

Only with such a strong European foundation can Maastricht further develop as a livable, supportive, and youthful city. Economic strength and the social foundation are, in fact, fully intertwined. A thriving local economy ensures financial security, equal opportunities, and new possibilities for both young and old.

Sjeng and New Maastrichtian. **To achieve this, Maastricht must cooperate in a much more integrated manner with South Limburg and the border region.** Furthermore, there must be a more effective interplay between the municipality, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, cultural organisations, and politicians. After all, all these partners are working together to build the socio-economic future of our region.

For Volt, this means investing in innovation, sustainability, and collaboration in Maastricht, both in the city centre and in the neighbourhoods. Greening, car-free living, and a strong social infrastructure are not obstacles for existing or new entrepreneurs; rather, they generate new energy that makes Maastricht more attractive to investors, visitors, and residents. A city that is livable and future-oriented attracts talent, offers new residents a new home, and provides entrepreneurs with the space to innovate.

Whether community centres, at Brightlands, or in the city centre, this new Maastricht energy should be palpable everywhere. By cleverly connecting economic development with education, culture, and sustainability, we strengthen the foundation of a city and region that is not only beautiful and historically unique, but also innovative and forward-thinking. This way, Maastricht remains what it is today and becomes even more tomorrow: a unique residential city, an economic hub, and a sustainable meeting place in the vibrant heart of Europe.



7.1 The city centre at the table: a greener, more liveable, and enterprising centre:

Our city center is the economic heart of Maastricht: more than one in three jobs in the city are located within the city centre's ecosystem. This means that a liveable city center is vital not only for the residents but also for the large number of people who call the city center their second home every day. Businesses in the city center indicate that they are concerned about four major challenges: greening, safety, enforcement and talent⁷⁹.

- **Volt wants the municipality to launch a new initiative: bringing the city centre to the table.** Together with city centre entrepreneurs and relevant partners such as Maastricht University, Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, Vista, major cultural institutions, Centrum Management Maastricht (CMM), Ondernemend Wyck, and the Business Collective City Centre (BOC), the municipality will meet annually at City Hall to discuss these four pillars and evaluate the progress.
- Volt believes that everyone should benefit from the city centre's role as the city's economic engine. Therefore, it's essential that the sports and cultural sectors are included in these discussions alongside retail and hospitality. **Cultural institutions often offer a refreshing perspective on attracting a diverse forms of tourism**, which strengthens economic resilience. (See also: *chapter 6: a Culturally Connecting Maastricht*).
- It is crucial that **our knowledge institutions are utilised more deliberately by the municipality to strengthen our city centre economy**. UM provides economic expertise, Zuyd offers direct experience in hospitality and entrepreneurship, and Vista provides the skilled professionals who form the backbone of our city centre. Working together on a unified vision for the city centre is an excellent way to bridge the gap between educational institutions and the local economy (see also: *5.5 Euregional talent for the future*).
- **Greening not only improves liveability but also creates a more attractive environment for businesses.** It is therefore vital that the municipality involves the business community in the process of reducing car traffic and increasing urban greenery. High quality of life is in everyone's interest. Currently, the city centre has a green space percentage of 15%. Volt wants to increase this to 40% (see also: *2.1 From concrete city to Europe's green capital*).
- Maastricht is facing a historic labour shortage. A CMM survey shows that one in three city centre businesses faces a staff shortage⁸⁰. **Our 'Plan for the New Maastrichtian' is essential for deploying young talent.** Part of this shortfall can be addressed by investing more in the existing Talent Retail Academy, a collaboration between UM, Zuyd, Fontys, Vista, and South Limburg SMEs. Furthermore, Volt's proposal to offer free Dutch language courses and actively promote them to international students will be implemented to help bridge the gap. (see also: *5.2 Learning Dutch? That should be free!*; and: *5.5 Euregional talent for the future*).

⁷⁹ CMM (2025). Politiek Café - Centrum als ecosysteem.

⁸⁰ CMM (2025). Politiek Café - Centrum als ecosysteem.

- **A vibrant and liveable city thrives on a healthy nightlife.** We want the municipality to work with entrepreneurs and the cultural sector to find creative solutions for this (see: *6.6 A new nightlife for Maastricht*).

7.2 More space for shared mobility:

To make Maastricht less car-centric, regulation alone is not the only way forward. On key fronts, Volt wants to create more space to enable innovative transport.

- Volt wants the municipality to **investigate successful international examples of shared mobility** and determine to what extent deregulation could facilitate this—for example, by making it easier to provide shared bicycles.
- Currently, development permits on the Maas are too strictly regulated. This has blocked various attempts to **launch small-scale water taxis based on the Rotterdam model**. Such transport could make it far more attractive for residents to travel quickly from A to B without hindering pedestrians or cyclists.

7.3 Brightlands: the South Limburg engine for innovation:

Brightlands is the foremost ecosystem of South Limburg and Venlo. Here, **companies, researchers, and students collaborate on the major challenges of tomorrow's Europe:** health, nutrition, sustainability, and artificial intelligence. With Brainport Eindhoven as an example, where knowledge and manufacturing have reinforced each other for decades, the municipality of Maastricht must take the lead in making South Limburg and Brightlands into a similar breeding ground for innovation. Our location is perfect: South Limburg can become the hub connecting Eindhoven's knowledge economy, Brussels' geopolitics, and the manufacturing industry of the German Ruhr region. To achieve this, however, Maastricht must adopt a more active role.

- Budget cuts from the national government in The Hague regarding education, science, and healthcare threaten our region's economic foundation. **Volt wants South Limburg to establish a strong, integrated lobby team** alongside Brightlands to continue attracting the resources necessary for these sectors.
- Volt supports the municipality's plan to reserve **€20 million for the 2026–2029 term for the further development of the Maastricht Health Campus and Brightlands Randwyck**. It is vital that an evaluation is conducted in 2028 to ensure this investment is sufficient to realise Brightlands' ambitions, such as talent attraction and European positioning.
- The *Brightlands Startup League*⁸¹ connects health, sustainability, nutrition and digitalisation with the innovative power of young South Limburg startups. **The municipality of Maastricht, alongside UM, Zuyd and Vista, must ensure that this League becomes far more visible within our educational institutions.**

⁸¹ *Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus* (2025).

- The AMIBM (Aachen-Maastricht Institute for Biobased Materials) is a pioneering cross-border research institute where UM and RWTH Aachen collaborate on the Chemelot Campus⁸². **Volt wants South Limburg municipalities and UM to invest more actively in AMIBM to link the German manufacturing industry with the Brainport knowledge sector.**
- Maastricht has proven its potential to be a premier European conference by successfully securing the leading Big Science Business Forum in 2026, thanks in part to Brightlands and MECC⁸³. **Volt wants Maastricht to focus more on attracting European conferences where Maastricht, Liege, and Aachen together form a central hub in global knowledge networks.**
- The planned Einstein Telescope is already driving activity at the Maastricht Health Campus, through projects like the ETpathfinder⁸⁴. **Securing the Einstein Telescope must remain a top priority for the lobby efforts of Maastricht, South Limburg and our Euregion.**
- Volt wants Maastricht Marketing to shift its focus away from attracting more tourists; we already have sufficient tourism. **Instead, it should better position our innovative economy within Europe.** A prime example is the Vitrobot, developed at the Brightlands Health Campus, which is now helping researchers worldwide understand diseases like Alzheimer's and Covid-19. Highlighting such successes across Europe puts innovative South Limburg on the map.

7.4 Learn from Copenhagen, use the tourist!

Volt wants to adopt the Copenhagen strategy, *CopenPay*, and **engage tourists through an app to make the city more sustainable, liveable, and cleaner**⁸⁵. By using a similar app in Maastricht, visitors are rewarded for making sustainable choices during their stay, such as helping to clean the Meuse River, renting a bicycle, or assisting with the maintenance of the city park. They can then use the points they earn at participating Maastricht businesses. Residents, entrepreneurs, and tourists alike are enthusiastic about the initiative. Together, we can make our city vibrant and livable!

7.5 Beatrixhaven – port of the future:

The municipality does not yet sufficiently recognise the added value of a well-functioning inland port. **The Beatrixhaven can play a pivotal role in the future.** On one hand, Liège is investing heavily in its own inland port, which means a connecting hub in the north of Maastricht could become a significant economic driver for our city. On the other hand, Europe is prioritising sustainable mobility and infrastructure, with an increasing volume of freight transport moving by water rather than by road.

- **The Municipality of Maastricht must therefore develop a robust economic plan for the Beatrixhaven in collaboration with the Province.** This plan must account for Euregional developments and European green ambitions, providing a clear blueprint for our 'Port of the Future'.

⁸² Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus (2025).

⁸³ Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus (2025).

⁸⁴ Brightlands Maastricht Health Campus (2025).

⁸⁵ Visit Copenhagen (2025). CopenPay. [Link](#)

7.6 A more rational drug policy for Maastricht and Europe:

At both national and European levels, Volt strives for a drug policy that prioritises public health and street safety. This policy is based on scientific insights rather than political emotion. Volt therefore advocates for the **decriminalisation of possession for personal use, combined with a strong preventive policy to discourage dangerous drug use and a rigorous approach to tackling organised crime.**

- **Volt is opposed to the Maastricht resident criterion (the 'I-criterion'), which prohibits Belgians and Germans from purchasing cannabis in our city⁸⁶. This rule only encourages an increase in cross-border crime.**
- **As long as there is little positive change at the national level, Volt wants to engage with local police units to investigate regional possibilities for moving towards a healthier drug policy for Maastricht.**
- **Maastricht is participating in the 'closed coffee shop chain experiment', where the production, distribution, and sale of cannabis are regulated within a closed system⁸⁷. Although Volt remains critical of the limited scope of the experiment and would prefer to see full legalisation across the Netherlands and Europe, we support this pilot. It offers the opportunity to better combat illegal trade and quality issues while safeguarding public health. **It is essential that the municipality prepares to implement this policy structurally immediately following the successful completion of the pilot.****

⁸⁶ Van Luyk, M. (2025). In Maastricht, you can now buy legal weed, unless you're Belgian. *Belang van Limburg*. [Link](#)

⁸⁷ Gemeente Maastricht (2025). [Link](#)

CHAPTER 8

AN INCLUSIVE MAASTRICHT

NO HOMOPHOBIA
NO VIOLENCE
NO RACISM
NO SEXISM
YES KINDNESS
YES PEACE
YES EQUALITY
YES LOVE

We see polarisation increasing across Europe⁸⁸, and loneliness is on the rise⁸⁹, particularly among young people⁹⁰. **Europeans are hungry for connection, and that connection begins with an inclusive society.** This inclusivity must be built at the local level. In Maastricht, connectivity is even more vital than elsewhere. Our city is a unique European hub with a high proportion of international residents. Languages and cultures have traditionally intertwined in this ancient pilgrimage city, and with the presence of the university, new ideas constantly flow into the heart of our community.

Yet, our city is still too often viewed as a mere stopover for newcomers. Our future should instead be built on residents who make this city their permanent home: a city where people put down roots, where children grow up, and where talent stays. Maastricht must become a more welcoming 'home nest'. For students, for international residents, and for those seeking refuge.

Many of our inclusive policies are interwoven with our other chapters. Therefore, this section frequently references previous policy proposals to demonstrate how they align with our overarching strategy for inclusivity.

Volt has chosen an inclusive Maastricht as both an economic and a social strategy. Those who arrive here should be able to stay. This requires a significantly greater effort from the municipality to offer comprehensive language education, implement robust social policies, build sufficient and diverse housing, and expand a strong, inclusive community network. Only by taking these steps can we bridge the gaps between neighbourhoods, between different social groups, and between politicians and citizens. **Together we are working towards a common goal: building an inclusive European city. A place where anyone can truly become a *Maastrichtenaar*.**

8.1 Our region as a final destination – not as a stopover:

For students, expats, and even asylum seekers, Maastricht is too often a stopover rather than a final destination. Moreover, Maastricht hosts many tourists who are, by definition, here temporarily. As described in the chapter *A Young Maastricht*, this is a significant challenge for our city. To ensure that Maastricht becomes a final destination for new residents, we must invest more in an inclusive society.

- A significant proportion of Maastricht students leave immediately after graduation⁹¹. Research currently focuses mainly on how many students remain in the Netherlands as a whole. Volt wants the municipality to collaborate with Brightlands on an extensive study specifically **focused on retaining students in our city and Euregion**. Maastricht has no interest in seeing its talent move to Amsterdam. Based on this research, the municipality and the South Limburg region must prepare concrete policy to implement this strategy.

88 Wagner, M. (2020). Affective polarization in Europe. *European Political Science Review*, Cambridge. [Link](#)

89 European Commission (2025). *Loneliness in the European Union*. [Link](#)

90 Bertelmann Stiftung (2024). A comparison of youth loneliness in Europe in 2024. [Link](#)

91 Maastricht University (2024). *Stay rates foreign students' shortage sectors' relatively high*. [Link](#)

- Volt wants international students to feel at home. Therefore, the municipality and university must actively **offer free Dutch language courses** (see 5.2 *Learning Dutch? It should be free!* for our inclusive language policy).
- Nearly 40% of international workers ('expats') in Maastricht indicate they do not feel sufficiently integrated⁹². Dutch language courses should be made more accessible to them. **Volt wants the municipality and university to explore offering a wider range of Dutch courses at the Language Centre on weekends, when most working residents have more time.**
- Media outlets receiving municipal subsidies should **focus more on English-language communication and reporting**. For example, while RTV Maastricht receives significant support, it currently invests very little in its 'News in English' platform. This must change.
- **The municipality should organise a quarterly English-language event called 'The New Maastrichtian'**. These events will allow international employees to discuss questions, challenges, and opportunities with the municipality. It will provide information and meeting places for international residents and serve as a sounding board for the municipality to connect with a group it often struggles to reach. Held on weekends, these events will be accessible to working families.

8.2 Refugees are Maastrichtians, too!

True mutual integration does not begin in a dusty ministry in The Hague, but in the hyper-local reality of the city. Maastricht's local society forms the essential foundation for mutual connection and integration.

- According to forecasts, half of the residents in asylum seeker centres will be status holders (recognised refugees) by 2026. This means many people with residency status will still be waiting for transfer to regular housing⁹¹. The current housing crisis is often wrongly used as a justification to frame asylum migration as a major problem. **It is therefore vital that building homes remains a top priority, ensuring all residents, new and old, have a roof over their heads and social tensions decrease** (see Chapter 3: *A Habitable Maastricht*).
- Notable Maastricht initiatives, such as 'Common Carnival', which featured a refugee Prince Carnival in 2016⁹⁴, are more relevant than ever. **Volt wants the municipality to revive such initiatives by involving existing associations, cultural institutions, and SMEs in welcoming asylum seekers and refugees into social and cultural life.** Associations like the Carnival Association De Mineurs are already strongly committed to mutual integration and can help the municipality by sharing best practices⁹⁵.
- Cities like Eindhoven and Utrecht are already excelling at connecting knowledge institutions, companies, and associations with refugees⁹⁶. Maastricht must learn from these examples.
- Amsterdam's '**pilot work desk**' successfully connected asylum seekers with employers⁹⁷. Maastricht should follow this example to help newcomers enter the workforce more quickly.

92 Gemeente Maastricht (2024). *Internationals and cross-border employees in the Maastricht region*. [Link](#)

93 NOS (2025). 'Helpt van het aantal asielopvangplekken in 2026 bezet door statushouders'. [Link](#)

94 NOS (2016). *Carnaval met Prins Ali d'n Ierste*. [Link](#)

95 COA (2025). *Prinses carnaval op azc Maastricht: Nagham, Alaafl*. [Link](#)

96 Razenberg, I. & De Gruijter, M. (2025). *De rol van gemeenten bij arbeidsparticipatie van vluchtelingen: inspirerende voorbeelden*. [Link](#)

97 *Binnenlands Bestuur* (2025). *Amsterdamse pilot helpt statusloze asielzoekers aan werk*. [Link](#)

- We can also learn from the rest of Europe. For example, **the German initiative Über den Tellerrand ('Thinking outside the box') brings communities and refugees together through practical social activities, such as communal cooking events⁹⁸.**

8.3 Distributing status holders according to the 'strongest shoulders':

Volt wants Maastricht to ensure a fair distribution of status holders across the city, based on the principle that **the strongest shoulders should bear the greatest weight**. By doing so, we reduce the pressure on neighbourhoods where social support systems are already strained and strengthen social cohesion throughout the city. Volt therefore advocates for creating more space for refugees with residency status to live in neighbourhoods with fewer socio-economic challenges, such as Sint Pieter or Villapark. We want the municipality to make clear agreements with housing associations to ensure that new social housing units are distributed more evenly across Maastricht. In this way, integration ceases to be a task for individual neighbourhoods and becomes a shared responsibility of the entire city (see also: Chapter 3: *A Habitable Maastricht*).

8.4 An inclusive Maastricht is a *proud* Maastricht:

While national politics often feels distant and nationalism can be exclusionary, **positive and inclusive local pride (chauvinism)** can act as the 'cement' for a city and its society. The municipality must work with institutions like *Veldeke* and *Hoes veur 't Limbörgs* to make our local Maastricht culture, history, and language accessible to new residents.

- The municipality must actively engage with these partners to **develop a strategy for inclusive pride**. The main goal is to encourage new residents who are interested in Maastricht's culture to immerse themselves in it.
- **Volt wants to make Maastricht and Limburg traditions more accessible to both newcomers and young people** through facilitated language courses in collaboration with *Veldeke* and cultural and history education provided by the municipality to school communities. The mindset needs to shift: **anyone can become a 'Sjeng'** (see also: 5.3 *Making Limburgish attractive*).

8.5 Building bridges throughout the city:

An inclusive Maastricht can only be guaranteed by facilitating conscious encounters between different worlds. Volt wants the municipality to make deliberate social and spatial planning choices to bring the various groups in our city closer together. We achieve this by **bridging the socio-economic divides** in the city (see: 3.1 *More active land policy to combat the housing crisis*; and 6.1 *A clear vision for Maastricht City of Culture*), a **pleasant, liveable and accessible car-free centre** (see: 1.1 *Make the center of Maastricht car-free*), to **develop a Social MVV that can serve as the social heart of the city** (see: 6.4

⁹⁸ *Über den Tellerrand* (2025). [Link](#)

MVV as the Maastricht Neighborhood House) and by **realising Maastricht Living Rooms in the various city districts** (see:4.4 *The Maastricht Living Room*). But also by **improving accessibility for residents on a budget**, such as by giving vulnerable households priority on social heating networks and prioritising greening in neighbourhoods most affected by heat stress (see:2.1 *From concrete city to Europe's green capital*).

8.6 An inclusive Maastricht is a *safe* Maastricht:

Everyone should feel safe in Maastricht, regardless of their background, age, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. **Volt believes that real safety begins with meeting one another; by fostering mutual acquaintance, mistrust decreases and understanding grows.** At the same time, Volt is realistic: an inclusive city also requires professional and respectful law enforcement. The municipality must continue to invest in well-trained City Enforcement Officers (BOAs) and police officers who act proportionately and with empathy. This is how we build a Maastricht where safety is not merely enforced, but shared through mutual understanding.

8.7 The Rainbow Community in Maastricht:

The LGBTQ+ community in Maastricht has faced incidents of violence and intimidation in recent years. Volt considers this unacceptable. We are committed to a city where everyone can be themselves safely and visibly. Particular attention must be paid to the most vulnerable groups within the Rainbow community, such as international students, refugees, the elderly, non-binary individuals, and transgender people.

- The municipality should allocate additional resources and collaborate more closely with local LGBTQ+ organisations to facilitate meetings that improve social safety in education and public spaces.
- The municipality also plays a key role in the visibility of the Regenboog community. Inclusive representation should be the standard in all communications and marketing efforts. Volt wants Maastricht to serve as a role model for the region in this regard.
- In addition, Volt proposes to investigate, together with the major cities in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, whether **a Euregion Pride can be organised**. An event that celebrates diversity and cross-border collaboration.
- Following the example of Amsterdam, Volt wants the municipality, in collaboration with the GGD (Public Health Service), to **conduct research into LGBTQ+ acceptance among young people in Maastricht**. Based on the results, the municipality can develop targeted policies to foster inclusion in the next generation.

VERKIEZINGSPROGRAMMA
Volt Maastricht



CHAPTER 9

A DEMOCRATIC MAASTRICHT

A supportive, connecting and inclusive society can only be built on a strong foundation. **That social foundation is our democracy.** Current societal developments that are being felt all over the world clearly show that this foundation is under pressure everywhere in Europe (and the world).

For Volt, the quest for a stronger democracy begins locally, as close as possible to the people themselves. A democratic Maastricht is a strong Maastricht. Major issues require trust between the various groups in our society and between citizens and the government. **Volt therefore opts for a policy that is more accessible, understandable and transparent,** so that every Maastricht resident can identify with our political system and so that everyone's interests are represented in Maastricht's democracy.

The transition to a more democratic Maastricht will only succeed if more is invested in new instruments that increase citizens' say, whether they are *Sjengen* who are already rooted or new Maastricht residents. Volt therefore focuses on, among other things, **a permanent Citizens' Council, Euregional citizens' councils, political visibility in the neighbourhood and lobby registers.** This way, we increase participation and transparency, and ensure that the voice of residents carries more weight than that of interest groups.

A strong society starts with a democratic culture. This means clear communication from politicians, bilingual services and communication, more attention to democracy in schools and a more integrated democratisation policy within the municipality. Only by consciously strengthening our city's political culture can we work towards a democracy that benefits everyone in the city.

9.1 One permanent Citizens' Council:

Volt is committed to a permanent Citizens' Council. This will be a follow-up to the pilot Citizens' Summit⁹⁹, which Volt initiated in the municipality and has gone through a successful process and evaluation in the past term. **Citizen councils lead to sound decisions, broader support for political considerations, stronger mutual understanding, and concrete, actionable advice for politicians.** Moreover, unlike many other forms of citizen participation (such as the Citizen Budget), they are not an instrument that can easily be deployed by influential residents. This is because the Citizen Council consists of randomly selected citizens.

- The meeting is being set up based on a **fixed group of randomly selected citizens**, which reflect our diverse city based on different characteristics, such as neighbourhood, age, gender and income.
- The Citizens' Council is **a permanent institution in the city and determines the topics itself** for its citizen councils.
- The citizen councils carry out the processes, discussions, and recommendations. The consultations are closed, so that politicians cannot interfere. **Participants are guided by a process supervisor and always receive substantive support from experts.**

⁹⁹ RTV Maastricht (2023). Maastricht krijgt eigen burgerraad. [Link](#)

- The Citizens' Council should not be a party for those who are already doing well. Any barriers to participation should be removed as much as possible. **Standard provisions such as childcare, travel expenses and interpreters should therefore be covered where possible.**

9.2 Euregional Citizen Councils:

The major issues facing our region don't stop at the border: employment, cross-border crime, digital security, good education, and public transport are just a few examples that have clear Euregional dimensions.

- **Traditional consultations between neighbouring countries and associated municipalities are often slow**, complex and not very decisive. A Euregional citizens' council, on the other hand, is not bureaucratic and, thanks to the randomly selected citizens who participate, puts more pressure on neighboring countries to listen to their cross-border solutions.
- Residents from the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany work together on fact-finding via **multilingual meetings, weigh interests together and arrive at clear, feasible recommendations with broad support.**
- Such deliberation brings people together in concrete terms – not through abstract structures, but through encounters and joint conversations. **In this way, Euregional citizens' councils also ensure that mutual understanding and context are strengthened among ordinary people.** And, that solutions are provided that take into account differences in legislation and regulations.
- Exactly because the advice is drawn up jointly, **municipalities, provinces and neighbouring countries can then adopt the Euregional advice more quickly and consistently.**

9.3 Democracy in education:

School communities in Maastricht must make more of an effort to teach democratic values and the rule of law. **Volt therefore wants Maastricht - together with schools, UM, Zuyd, Vista and the municipal organization - to bring democracy into the classroom**, including through social studies, but also takes the class to the town hall and the city hall.

- How does local decision-making work? What is a budget? How does public consultation work? **Trained civil servants can provide important guest lectures on democracy and law to young people.**
- Strengthening citizenship in education should not only focus on the local dimension, but should also invite students **to think critically about major democratic challenges in the world**, such as the challenges of the rule of law and the political issues of humanitarian conflicts, such as those between Israel and Palestine.
- Using simulations, **students practice what it is like to be on a council**, how debates are facilitated and how laws are negotiated and passed.

- **Students can be included in student councils organised by the school communities** and can provide annual student recommendations to the municipality, thus making the city more child-friendly and attractive to young people. These initiatives can be closely linked to the existing Children's Council and can draw inspiration from the existing democratically elected student councils at UM and Zuyd University of Applied Sciences.
- Volt wants schools to make democracy practical: **Students participate in policy development, organise dialogues and actively think about the challenges of their daily school life.** Initiatives that involve children and young people in daily developments at school and outside of school, such as Citizenship Education lessons on VISTA and the Jong043 children's newspaper, should be supported as much as possible.

9.4 Guarantee the right to demonstrate:

Volt wants **the right to demonstrate in Maastricht to be fully guaranteed.** Safety is important, but it should never be a reason to restrict the democratic right to peaceful protest. The municipality must facilitate demonstrations, not discourage them. Everyone who lives or works in Maastricht, regardless of nationality, should be able to organise a demonstration—whether it's a demonstration for Palestinian rights or a demand for more bicycle parking in the city center. The mandatory use of DigiD when registering for demonstrations excludes international residents and is therefore unacceptable in an open, democratic, and a European *Mestreech*.

9.5 Cooperation without looking away:

The municipality of Maastricht and its partners **do not cooperate with organisations that contribute to human rights violations.** If there are any indications of such involvement, the cooperation should be reviewed immediately, in accordance with the guidelines also used by the European Union to screen such partners. Volt chooses international cooperation that is in line with our European view of universal human rights.

9.6 Working on a lobby register:

Volt is in favor of **Aldermen being transparent about the agreements they make with interest representatives.** There is nothing wrong with such conversations, but it's important that citizens have access to this information. This way, Maastricht residents have a clear understanding of the daily agendas of the Maastricht administration.

9.7 Democracy starts with accessibility:

Maastricht politics is often difficult for citizens to follow. The media does what it can, but the language used by the municipality is often difficult to understand.

- To keep Maastricht politics accessible and understandable for everyone, **Maastricht policy and municipal reporting are communicated more consistently in both C2 Dutch (with appropriate technical jargon) and summarized in B1 Dutch (with clear everyday language that is understandable to everyone).**
- Artificial intelligence does an excellent job at most of what's needed to achieve this. Volt is happy to help the municipality select responsible, European software that can assist the municipality in this process.
- In addition, **policies and important developments must be communicated consistently in English, in addition to Dutch.** For Volt, bilingual communication involves more than just an accompanying English sentence with a QR code at the bottom of physical letters.

9.8 Bring local politics to the neighborhoods:

Volt wants to bring **municipal politics closer to the people of Maastricht** through the chain of libraries, cultural spaces and community centres.

- Domain meetings and other important **council meetings can be organised more often in such public spaces**, in various districts. In this way, we make Maastricht politics much more accessible for people for whom finding (the road to) the town hall is a significant hurdle.
- **We want to install screens in community centres that show voting results, political agendas and council developments.** In this way, citizens are encouraged to participate in local politics when they are in public spaces.

9.9 A Maastricht democracy meter:

Currently, some municipal domains are already equipped with a so-called "dashboard" (a progress monitor), such as the social domain. But for the health of our local democracy, there's no such dashboard as of yet. Which citizens are participating in what? What kind of participation? What has been decided and implemented, and in which neighborhood? **Access to, and satisfaction with, our local democracy is not structurally measured in our city.** Volt calls for a Maastricht democracy meter to be introduced.



CHAPTER 10

A EUROPEAN MAASTRICHT

Looking at Maastricht from The Hague, our city and region seem like a remote corner of the Netherlands. As a pan-European party, Volt sees things differently: **With Aachen, Liège and both Limburgs, Maastricht is located at a European hub** which, with the right long-term vision, can become an essential meeting place for the Benelux and Germany.

Within a radius of 100 kilometers, Maastricht is located between Europe's fastest-growing knowledge economy in Brainport Eindhoven, the geopolitical heavyweight of Brussels, and the still-relevant manufacturing industry of North Rhine-Westphalia. **In this vibrant heart of Europe, Maastricht offers a quality of life that a European will not easily find elsewhere.**

For Maastricht residents Europe is not an abstract concept. It's a daily reality. This is where the challenges begin, but also where the solutions of and for Europe originate. From international crime to the Euregional labor market, from water management along the Meuse River to educational institutions in the border region, and from strong European examples in green climate policy to facilitating good language education: **Volt shows that it is essential for Maastricht to focus on cross-border answers to all important political themes.**

In this chapter you will find the most important points from the Election Programme that focus on a European Maastricht. **This is how we work on a *Mestreech - made in Europe*.**

10.1 Maastricht is a European city:

For Volt, Maastricht politics doesn't stop at Itteren or Wolder. We're committed to **a strong Euregion Meuse-Rhine**. That means:

- A strong cycling and public transport network to Liège, Hasselt, and Aachen. We want to focus on a strong Meuse-Rhine lobby team, with **a Charlemagne rail line that better connects Maastricht with Brussels, Liège, Aachen and Cologne** as a long-term goal (see: 1.6 *No Maastricht-Aachen Airport, but a Cologne-Brussels line*).
- The **reopening of the Maastricht-Hasselt railway line, an important link in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion**. This connection significantly shortens travel times, promotes sustainable mobility, and strengthens cross-border cooperation between the Netherlands and Belgium. With this railway line, we are investing in economic growth, clean air, and better opportunities for students and commuters. Together, we are building a connected, future-proof region. That's why it's important that the railway bridge remains intact.
- A **Meuse-Rhine Police Force that combats cross-border crime and criminal networks**. Through strong lobbying, the European Union and Europol can help set up such an organisation and consider the Police Force itself as a pilot for other parts of Europe. This way, it can serve as *best practice* for police units in the Benelux and Germany and European police networks in border regions.

- **A Smart Meuse-Rhine initiative, where companies, educational institutions and politicians form a cross-border network for innovation** (see: 5.4 *One South Limburg education network for the future*).
- **Better facilities for cross-border workers, students and pupils** by strengthening existing border information points, but also a strong lobby in The Hague and Brussels for the rights of cross-border workers, so that cross-border exchange is facilitated.
- **A cultural subsidy that focuses on culturally connecting cultural makers, institutions and residents of the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.** A strong Euregional cultural sector can create the connection between the often lacking Euregional political cooperation and local residents (see: 6.8 *Culture in the Euregion - culture as regional cement*).

10.2 Learning from Europe:

The challenges we experience here are shared across Europe. The pressure on our local healthcare, the need for new democratic instruments, and the commitment to sustainability: these are all issues to which European regions and cities can already provide their own answers. Volt wants Maastricht to lead the way in learning from other European cities. We are learning from Vilnius, London, and Treviso in the area of sustainability (see: 10.2 *Learning from Europe*), from Eindhoven and Enschede for free Dutch language education (see: 5.2 *Learning Dutch? It should be free!*), from Germany for the more active involvement of migrants and from various cities and countries for inclusive care (see: 8.2 *Refugees are Maastrichtians, too!*). This means that we generate new ideas by proactively searching for European best practices, but also test our own ideas against European examples.

10.3 Maastricht as a European ambassador city:

Our city occupies a unique position. Not only as a potential meeting place in the Europe of tomorrow, but also as the birthplace of the Maastricht Treaty, and thus of the European Union. **Volt therefore sees Maastricht as an important European ambassador city.** As such, the municipality, together with relevant local partners, such as Studio Europa, can work harder to make Maastricht a laboratory for European social issues: how do we make “Europe” tangible and understandable for citizens?

- Volt wants there to be a **Maastricht House of Europe**, possibly combined with existing public spaces of the municipality (such as the library). Here, cross-border workers, students, young people, and other interested Maastricht residents can ask questions about the European Union and be informed in an understandable way about the Union's activities.
- Volt wants structural attention to European themes in the municipal council. Previously mentioned initiatives to bring the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion closer together (see: 6.8 *Culture in the Euregion - culture as regional cement*) can be intertwined with a **special Euregional culture week**. During this week, we, together with Aachen, Liège, and both Limburgs (Belgian and Dutch Limburg), will celebrate and highlight our shared Euregional history, culture, and future. This will be done in

VERKIEZINGSPROGRAMMA

Volt Maastricht

collaboration with key partners in the city, including museums, school communities, and higher education institutions.

- Volt wants **the European Affairs portfolio to gain more weight in the municipality**. The Alderman in question will serve as the European conscience of the Executive Board. With this portfolio, the Alderman will be responsible for promoting our region's lobbying power in The Hague and Brussels, actively engaging with formal and informal partners in the border region (including universities and businesses), and promoting Maastricht at Euroregional and international events and conferences.

EPILOOG

In an era full of new challenges and opportunities, Maastricht residents, Limburgers, and Europeans face a choice. Not just between Volt and other parties, but between a confident European future and fearful, navel-gazing politics. Volt chooses a city that thinks and acts as a European hub: resilient, social, progressive, and green – for residents and newcomers alike. The Maastricht housing crisis is part of a European housing crisis. Climate problems don't stop at the border. Our economic opportunities and challenges are not Dutch, but transnational. Our democracy works both ways: on the foundation of a confident, proud Maastricht and as part of a broad, democratic European community of values.

With a modest party, we've shown that things can be done differently. Volt launched a successful pilot for a Maastricht citizens' council – now we want to make it permanent. Volt ensured that international students were also eligible for the one-time energy allowance – now we want to structurally embed protection for non-Dutch residents in the social domain. Volt helped keep the children's newspaper Jong 043 afloat – now we want a permanent budget for all initiatives that make local democracy tangible for children and young people. We've also mobilized the Executive Board to lobby more vigorously for cultural subsidies in The Hague, including for Opera Zuid. But the next step is essential: a substantial increase in the sports and culture budget so we can combat segregation, involve sports and culture partners in youth care and elderly care, and use our cultural sector as a driver for concrete collaboration between the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany in our European border region.

If we truly want to make a European, progressive, and social difference in Maastricht, we need more clout. Volt currently holds two seats on the Maastricht city council. With three seats, social and progressive forces in Maastricht can no longer ignore our unique vision.

Do you want Maastricht to pursue a progressive, European course? Then support us on March 18, 2026. You can do so by voting for us.

Would you like to help us further with a Mestreech - made in Europe? Would you like to help us, for example by distributing flyers, organising community meetings, contributing to our plans, or organising activities in your neighbourhood? Send me an email and I'll get back to you as soon as possible: jules.ortjens@gemeentemaastricht.nl

With Maastrichtian and European regards,

Jules Ortjens
Volt Maastricht party leader