

# Volt Malta Manifesto 2022

Ivvota Aħjar.  
Ivvota Volt.



*Is-Sibt, 26 ta' Marzu*

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**Ivvota Aħjar.**

**Vote Better.**

**Ivvota Volt.**

**Vote Volt.**

**We are Volt Malta, Malta's new progressive party.**

**Volt Malta advocates for Democracy, Innovation and Sustainability.**

As a party, we represent the ideals of human ingenuity and equality tempered by an understanding that the world and all the people in it are precious and must be protected from exploitation. We want to bring renewed life into our country, to empower us as the people of our nation and create a society we can be proud of for generations to come. We are ambitious, we are young as a party and even those who comprise it. Which is exactly why we advocate for a better future because that is our future. Our goal is to shape our small corner of the world in a way that we do have a future, not as a nation of concrete and cronyism but as a nation of culture and expression.

Our plan is straightforward. We will tackle the entire system, from top to bottom, as it is the only way that we can solve the problems we face in the complex world we live in. Our manifesto is divided into four distinct sections;

**A democratic and just society** as we bring out the potential for equality in the way we conduct politics, the approach towards sexual healthcare, rights of autonomy that have been neglected and the decriminalization of facets of life in order to provide protection and service for those who need it.

**A beacon of innovation** by enriching the many industries our country is specialised in and by investing in our future generations. We aim to not place hasty bandaids on our business sector to keep it afloat but rather strengthen it by equipping everyone with the tools and knowledge necessary to participate in the sector.

**A model of sustainability** in order to tackle the ever-looming threat of climate change and also the slow depletion of our country's resources and reserves to maintain antiquated and redundant systems. We take a strict approach towards green power as well as build up the infrastructure to allow everyone to transition to a greener future.

**No one left behind**, as Volt Malta we believe that regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, orientation or background all people are deserving of a good life. We recognise the reality that some are privileged over others, which is why we must strive to provide equal opportunity for everyone.

Volt Malta aims to empower the people of our country through a European framework, one that is inclusive and built from the inspiration of countless minds across the continent. We must aim to be better than our predecessors. **Ivvota Aħjar. Ivvota Volt.**

# Chapter 1: A democratic and just society



In a democratic and just society, individuals are provided with the ability to make decisions for themselves and have control over their own lives. In order to accomplish this, we need to assure that all persons are in a position to access the means with which they have control.

Here we will discuss the need to reform our political system so that a level playing field for all voices can be achieved as opposed to letting the ancient duopoly reign of our two-party system remain unchallenged as it is. In the same breath, we must scrutinise the institutions that hold power over us, even going so far as to introduce new frameworks to do so.

For a society to be just we must provide all members of society with the same level of freedom. Two major facets of this freedom that our country lacks are the provision of bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive healthcare and education. We intend to implement measures to treat this failure in our society to continue pushing for the just society we deserve.

We must seek to treat all walks of life with empathy and compassion. By reforming the way we look upon aspects of society such as drug use, sex work and prison life we can better respect those who are impacted by these aspects for better or worse.

# Governance Reform

The government is the tool that we as a nation must use to enact our will on society. To this end, we must make sure those who wield this tool are doing so under strict scrutiny and with due diligence. Our goal is to make a system that is answerable to its people, strengthen the mechanisms of democracy and empower citizens at home and abroad to participate in the shaping of our society.

## Parliament

- **Adopt a fixed-term parliament.** By removing the Prime Minister's prerogative to call elections, and adopt a fixed 5-year parliament term.
  - A snap election can only be called through a vote of no confidence or if the government resigns.
  - We will define clear boundaries of when an 'election campaign' starts and ends, to ensure political parties & candidates can transparently provide their campaign spending.
- **Make being a Parliamentarian a full-time occupation,** and ensure proportional remuneration.
- **Legalise voting through Embassies & Postal Voting.** In light of the pandemic, Maltese living abroad who are eligible to vote should have the right to exercise their civic right & duty without worrying about pandemic related restrictions.

## Party Regulation

- **Decouple media outlets from political parties.** Political party ownership of media outlets does not balance out, issues are generally not binary.
  - Ensure the political parties work to publish their audited accounts within 2 years.
    - Lack of cooperation would be penalised by fines on the party.
    - Parties may ask for a 2-year extension, once, if they have been cooperative throughout the process in regularising their audited accounts.
    - The decoupling can only commence once audited accounts are published.
  - Ensure decoupling involves separation of administration and finances.
  - Allow One and Net to continue operating, separate from the political parties, to ensure media plurality.
- **All political party activities,** businesses & social enterprises should be regulated by political party financing law.
  - Ensure all income a political party earns through its activities adheres to political party financing law to ensure a full picture of a party's finances.

- Reform Political Party Financing Law to ensure it can regulate political party activities, businesses & social enterprises.
- Resolve the Constitutional issue of the Electoral Commission being investigator, prosecutor and judge of breaches in the law by creating separate bodies performing each role.
  - The Electoral Commission can't investigate cases since the laws put it in breach of the Constitution and the European Convention, including the right to a fair hearing.
- **Provide free auditing services** for small parties with less than €5,000 in assets.

## Diaspora

- **Create a Diaspora Council** within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to build a bridge between Malta and its global diaspora. The Council will work toward facilitating engagement between Maltese living abroad and Malta, through cultural and economic means, and as a way to encourage participation in Maltese society in a national and global context, and also encourage re-integration and/or investment into Malta. It will;
  - Have at minimum 1 representative per continent;
  - Countries with a significant quantity of Maltese emigrants have a dedicated country representative (e.g UK, Italy, Australia, USA, Canada)

## Rule of law

- **Implement the outstanding recommendations made by the Venice Commission, the European Commission's Rule of Law report and the Daphne Caruana Galizia Inquiry Report.**
- **Scrap the Golden Passport Scheme.**

# Transparency of State

Our country has suffered from back-door dealings having state and business intermingle with little to no restriction. Businesses operating in our country are encouraged to make off the book deals with one another as there exists no institution that will follow up on such behaviour, especially when even the state makes use of this opaque system. We aim to shine a light on these failings.

## Introduction of Integrity Pacts

*"An Integrity Pact is both a signed document and approach to public contracting which commits a contracting authority and bidders to comply with best practice and maximum transparency. A third actor, usually a civil society organisation, monitors the process and commitments made. Monitors commit to maximum transparency and all monitoring reports and results are made available to the public on an ongoing basis."* - Transparency International.



- **Develop the legal framework to allow Integrity Pacts.**
- **Adopt Transparency International's Recommendations** on using Integrity Pacts.
  - *An Integrity Pact is signed for a particular project between the procuring entity undertaking the project, the monitor (Civil Society) and the bidders.*

## Main Elements of Integrity Pacts

- An undertaking by the procuring entity that its officials **will not demand or accept any bribes, gifts or payments of any kind** and maintain appropriate disciplinary, civil or criminal sanctions in case of violation.
- A statement by each bidder that it has not paid, and **will not pay, any bribes** in order to obtain or retain the contract.
- An undertaking by each bidder to **disclose all payments** made in connection with the contract in question.
- The explicit acceptance by each bidder that the commitments and obligations remain in force for the winning bidder **until the contract has been fully executed.**
- A **set of sanctions** for any violation by a bidder of its statements or undertakings.
- A mechanism for **dispute resolution.**
- The identification of an **independent external expert monitor.**

## Role of the Monitor

- To be **totally independent** of the procuring entity, and not bound by their directives,
- To be **given access to all bidding- and contract-related meetings/documents** for screening;
- To **supervise the whole bidding/contractor selection process** and contract implementation;
- To **report immediately any indications of wrongdoing** to allow the other party to fix the situation.

## Private-Public Partnership

- **Make Integrity Pacts mandatory** for all Private-Public Partnerships.
  - For existing Private-Public Partnerships, work toward adding Integrity Pacts.

# Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare and Rights

Withholding the right to bodily autonomy from a massive portion of the population, taxing that same population simply for existing through products that are essential for their day to day life and neglecting the methods and training with which to prevent and treat issues that may come about are all a hallmark of an outdated and conservative society. We live in the 21st century but when it comes to sexual and reproductive awareness our approach is decades old, ignoring the problem entirely and expecting it to go away quietly. A lack of foresight blinded by bigotry and ignorance has led to ever-present cultural stigmatisation of the basic things that are part of the human experience. We have to uproot those weeds and plant new grass to grow in its place. We need an inclusive approach to healthcare and to open our eyes to the world that exists around us in the diversity of people.

## Education

We need to empower individuals with correct information so they may make informed decisions for their wellbeing, and to create a more empathic understanding of society.

- **Develop a Standard Factual & Inclusive Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights Curriculum.** Misinformation at educational institutions must not be tolerated or accepted.
  - **Mandatory for all educational institutions in Malta.** All schools would be allowed to teach more than the national curriculum, but not less, and may not contradict the national curriculum.
  - **The curriculum should be contextual to the age group,** starting from late primary school, and completed throughout secondary school. Refreshers should be provided at post-secondary and tertiary institutions.
  - **Inclusive** is defined as ensuring that;
    - LGBTQI+ related matters are taught by well-informed qualified individuals,
    - Persons with physical and/or mental disabilities receive high-quality relevant education on the subject,
    - In co-education schools, genders are not segregated.
  - **Support services for students** who may be questioning their sexuality & gender identity, and have any questions.
- **Offer Adults access to educational material and courses** on their sexual and reproductive rights, types of available contraception, protection against sexually transmitted diseases etc.
  - Make use of state media channels & collaborate with private state media channels to provide SRHR lessons during commercial breaks.

- Provide mandatory SRHR training for employees in the public sector to be taught over a period of time.
- Encourage and facilitate the creation of SRHR classes for the private sector to be taught over a period of time.
- Create free and public SRHR courses for the public to attend.

## Contraceptives

Contraceptives are a highly effective tool for minimising the risk of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and also unwanted pregnancies. Therefore access is of utmost importance.

- **Classify Contraceptives as Essential Medicines & Products.** During the beginning of the pandemic, there was a lack of availability of several contraceptives. There are numerous adverse effects on physical and mental health caused by an interruption for individuals who take hormonal contraceptives (among other types), and these can and must be avoided at all costs.
- **Access to Contraceptives.**
  - **Free from public healthcare facilities & hospitals.** By making contraceptives more accessible, it can prevent unwanted pregnancies. Especially for youths and low-income earners.
  - **Adopt the Fraser Guidelines for youths under 16.** These are guidelines used in the UK to address the specific issue of giving contraceptive advice and treatment to those under 16 without parental consent.
    - They have sufficient maturity and intelligence to understand the nature and implications of the proposed treatment.
    - They cannot be persuaded to tell their parents or to allow the doctor to tell them.
    - They are very likely to begin or continue having sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment.
    - Their physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless they receive advice or treatment.
    - The advice or treatment is in the young person's best interests.
  - **Reimbursable after purchasing from pharmacies.** The majority of contraceptives are female-orientated, causing an imbalance of purchasing power. (e.g. Regular contraceptive pills are a regular cost and don't necessarily correlate to sexual activity). Furthermore, it would be low-income earners and youths who would primarily benefit from having contraceptive purchases reimbursable.
    - Create provisions to avoid abuse of the system (e.g. resale of reimbursed products) by creating reasonable limits on reimbursements.
  - **Integrate hormonal contraceptives into the Pharmacy of Your Choice scheme.**
  - **Condoms should be freely accessible from post-secondary, and tertiary education institutions.** The distribution would be varied;

- Through student organisations, health and wellness centres, and dispensers.
  - **Morning After Pill should be available at all pharmacies** and provided without prejudice.
- **Introduce the Copper IUD** as an emergency contraceptive, and ensure accessibility akin to the Morning After Pill.

## Abortion

Criminalisation does not stop abortions, every year around 400 individuals in Malta have abortions, mostly medically and some by going abroad and the overwhelming majority of pregnancies happen within the first 12 weeks. Furthermore, whether someone wants to be pregnant and to carry it to term should always be a choice. No one should be forced to be an incubator. Lastly, criminalisation impacts the poorest among us. Not everyone can afford to travel abroad for safe & legal abortion, and since most abortions in Malta are medical, they are in the eyes of the law committing a crime so if they need any medical attention in the aftermath of the abortion they are in a very difficult and possibly life-threatening situation for having done something which shouldn't even be a crime.

- **Decriminalise Abortion.** Neither the person having an abortion, any doctor involved should be criminalised. Abortion should be a health policy issue, not criminal.
  - **Legalise Medical Abortions up to the first trimester (12 weeks).** Medical abortions account for a growing share of how abortions are done in many countries. It involves the use of 2 types of pills; Mifepristone & Misoprostol.
    - **Accessible & free through telemedicine, public & private healthcare facilities.**
      - Aim to ensure the process is as anonymous as possible.
    - **Classify Mifepristone & Misoprostol as an essential medicine.** To ensure there is always accessibility at the national level.
    - If for health reasons the individual is unable to have a medical abortion, then give the choice for a surgical one.
- **Legalise Surgical Abortions in exceptional circumstances, even at a later stage in the event of a/an;**
  - unsuccessful medical abortion;
  - a non-viable foetus;
  - pregnancy endangering the pregnant person's life;
  - pregnancy has a significantly negative effect on the mental health of the individual and may risk the person's life;
- **Introduce Abortion Aftercare services.**

## Facilities

Malta's GU clinic capacity is currently bursting at its seams. With ever-increasing rates of occurrence for various STDs, among them HIV/AIDs we need well equipped sexual health services.

- **Invest in Malta's Genitourinary Clinic.** Increase the dedicated budget to ensure proper training, and work toward increasing the number of permanent staff at the clinic. Furthermore, ensure its capacity to meet a growing number of patients & enable telemedicine services
- **Invest in Gozo's Genitourinary Clinic.** Increase the dedicated budget. The frequency at which people may visit the GU clinic in Gozo should increase. An afternoon every 2 weeks is insufficient. At a minimum, there should be a full day of availability per week and then increased further.

## ***Period Poverty***

Half of the population menstruates within their lifetime and is therefore dependent on menstrual products. On average, a person menstruates for 40 years and therefore has to buy 10,000 - 17,000 hygiene items. Menstrual hygiene is not a choice or a luxury, but a necessity that should be treated accordingly.

- **Menstrual products should be free** from all educational institutions, public healthcare facilities and hospitals, foodbank, prisons, homeless shelters, and public bathrooms.
  - A combined offer of pads and tampons in all institutions would be ideal.
    - Sanitary pads can be used when hygiene conditions are poor, this access should be prioritised. Tampons can pose a risk of toxic shock syndrome if used incorrectly or changed late.
    - It is easier for young menstruating people to handle sanitary pads.
- **Menstrual products should be reimbursable.** From retail outlets and pharmacies, they should fall on the 0% VAT bracket, and be reimbursable.
- **Integrate menstrual products into the Pharmacy of Your Choice scheme.**
  - This would first start by integrating first environmentally sustainable options such as menstrual cups, period underwear and reusable pads to encourage persons to use sustainable options.
  - Once uptake stabilises then the latter menstrual products would be introduced.

## ***Transgender Rights***

- **Make gender-affirming procedures**, such as hormone treatment, surgery and psychological support, free & accessible for transgender persons.

## ***PrEP & PEP***

- **PrEP & PEP should be free** from public healthcare facilities.
- **PrEP & PEP should be reimbursable** after purchase from pharmacies.

# Recreational Drugs

We should be well aware that there is a difference between leisure and addiction. When a substance is criminalised it does not magically get rid of the substance, instead, it creates a market for criminal activity and room for abuse of those less fortunate. Yet another element of conservatism that plagues the people of our nation which we must aim to correct. The vilification of drugs has caused harm, while the decriminalisation of it and treating the root problem of addiction provides lasting benefits and a reduction of criminality and substance overuse. We aim to make sure that transition can happen and that our institutions reflect this reality.

## *Authority*

- **Continuous critical observation.** It is critical to continuously follow the developments of decriminalisation and ensure the situation is studied well. The regulating authority for cannabis must have a broader mandate to truly help individuals.
- **Replace the Cannabis Authority with a Recreational Drugs Authority.**
  - Manage all matters relating to the responsible use of recreational drugs. This Authority should have the power to commission studies, propose improvements to the system, and propose guidelines.

## *Portuguese Model*

There is no better model to address drugs than the Portuguese model. Since its enactment, it has successfully tackled drug abuse, the black market and tackling HIV/AIDS, the last of which is evidently on the rise in Malta. In Portugal, the number of newly diagnosed HIV cases declined from 1,016 to 56 between 2001 and 2012. Furthermore, deaths due to drug use have decreased significantly – from approximately 80 in 2001 to 16 in 2012.

- **Proceed to adopt the Portugueses Model on drugs.**

# Ending Life with Dignity

Ending life is a profound existential process that cannot be reduced to a mere medical procedure. Volt believes that every person has the right to determine how to end their life with dignity, as long as no other person's life is harmed. A wide range of support should be available and accessible to those people seeking help, in addition to medical attention, such as palliative medicine to alleviate pain, hospices to offer psychological or spiritual support, or flexible work-time to allow family members to care for dying relatives. In particularly grave situations of "constant and unbearable physical suffering that cannot be alleviated", a person may seek assistance to terminate their life and deserves to be supported to do so with dignity.

## We distinguish three forms of terminating life upon request:

1. **Passive Euthanasia:** Passive euthanasia occurs when the person dies because the medical professionals either don't do something necessary to keep the person alive, or when they stop doing something that is keeping the person alive, such as switch off life-support machines, disconnect a feeding tube, don't carry out a life-extending operation, or don't give life-extending drugs.
2. **Assisted Dying:** A person makes the request out of their free will, not coerced or pressured by other persons, and with full conviction, to take their life, and seeks professional (typically doctor's) assistance. Before undertaking Assisted Dying, the person should first be given the opportunity to explore other life and death options available. To the very end, the person stays in full control of the process and is solely responsible for their death. The physician's role is to supply, but not to administer, the lethal drug
3. **Active Euthanasia:** Occurs, when a doctor, or another person, intentionally administers a fatal dose of medication to cause the patient's death at the patient's request and with full, informed consent. The main difference to assisted dying is, that active euthanasia is entirely physician-mediated, including administration of the lethal dose, whereas persons committing assisted dying to administer the lethal dose to themselves.

We further define an additional type of euthanasia :

- **Indirect Euthanasia** occurs when the medication that is administered to alleviate pain for the patient, also results in the patient's lifespan being shortened, such as palliative sedation. This is done with the intention of relieving one's suffering, rather than hastening one's death.

Furthermore, we divide each of the above definitions in the following manner:

- **Voluntary:** Where a person's life is ended at their request to relieve them of suffering

- **Involuntary:** Performed on a person who would be able to provide informed consent, but does not.

## *Living Wills*

- **Legalise Living Wills.**
  - A written statement detailing a person's desires regarding future medical treatment in circumstances in which they are no longer able to express informed consent

## *Passive Euthanasia*

- **Legalise Voluntary Passive Euthanasia;**
  - when someone explicitly requests that further life-sustaining/ life-extending treatment be withheld from them, allowing them to pass.
  - when someone gives their consent in advance through a living will, and requests passive euthanasia in the event they ever find themselves in a particular situation which they now regard as unbearable and offering no prospect of improvement and in which the person is incapacitated to make a decision themselves.

## *Indirect Euthanasia*

- **Legalise Voluntary Indirect Euthanasia;**
  - when medication is administered to alleviate pain for the patient, also results in the patient's lifespan being shortened, such as palliative sedation. This is done with the intention of relieving one's suffering, rather than hastening one's death.

## *Assisted Dying*

- **Legalise Voluntary Assisted Dying;**
  - For competent adults who suffer from "constant and unbearable physical suffering that cannot be alleviated". Ensure that the following criteria are met before allowing assisted dying:
    - The person is a competent adult who suffers from "constant and unbearable physical suffering that cannot be alleviated".
    - The person undergoes an ex-ante evaluation with at least two independent doctors and one psychiatrist, that need to confirm the person is a competent adult who suffers from "constant and unbearable physical suffering that cannot be alleviated," and that the person is making the request out of their own free will, not coerced or pressured by other persons.
    - The person's request must be made earnestly and with full conviction, as determined during the ex-ante evaluation.
  - Ensure that during the procedure;



- the person stays in full control of the process. Indeed, the physician's role is to supply, but not to administer, the lethal drug.
  - family and friends are allowed to be present if the patient chooses so.
- Put in place an ex-post committee to review all cases of assisted dying, composed of at least a medical expert, an ethicist and a legal expert. Every instance of assisted dying must be reported.
  - Ensure that no doctor is forced to take part in such a procedure.

## ***Active & Involuntary Euthanasia***

- **Ensure any form of involuntary and active Euthanasia is illegal.**

# **Sex Work Reform**

Malta's Sex Work sector has been described as the wild west. While it is legal, there are no protections for the workers and the potential for abuse is rife.

## ***Creating the Maltese Model on Sex Work***

- **Combat the black market.**
  - Conduct investigations to ensure no one is being forced to participate in the unregulated sector.
  - Ensure traffickers, and persons organising illegal brothels face imprisonment for at least 10 years.
  - Brothel operators, clients and even friends of workers aged 18 or over can be fined and imprisoned for facilitating people under the age of 21 into sex work for at least 10 years.
  - Ensure suspended sentences can not be given to traffickers & illegal brothel operators.
  - Ensure support services for individuals who have been coerced against their will into the industry, which protects the victim's personal safety and anonymity, and enables reporting of criminal activity.
- **Regulate the Sex Work industry.**
  - Classify workers of the industry as Sex Workers to combat stigma and ensure their human rights and worker rights are respected.
  - Ensure 21 is the legal age to enter this line of work & no one under the age of 18 can make use of the service.
  - Ensure only permanent residents can participate in the industry.
  - The service may not be advertised locally or internationally.
- **Legalise strictly Cooperative-run Brothels.**
  - Brothels may only be established by a cooperative of sex workers.
  - Locations, where they are established, must be agreed upon between the local council and cooperative.
    - Councils may not allow brothels to operate in some areas, however, they cannot ban brothels outright.

- The establishment and its owners must be registered with a responsible authority.
- Brothels must display signs promoting safer sex practices.
- Brothels must not accept inebriated clients.
- **Sex Workers must register their employment status.**
  - May opt to work self-employed.
- **Testing:** Sex Workers working under a co-operative must have their own STD testing policies that are agreed to by all members.
  - Independent/self-employed sex workers must follow the standard recommendation established by the GU Clinic, as well as standard GU clinic protocols in case of special circumstances - such as an STD positive client.
- **Every Sex Worker/ Brothel may request clients perform a check-up for any STDs** prior to delivering the service
  - Brothels can not force or coerce a Sex Worker to have sex with a client who has not had an STD test done beforehand. The Brothel owners may face fines and/or imprisonment.
  - Sex workers & brothels must not accept inebriated clients.
  - Unprotected sex is not allowed.
    - If client coerces the sex worker into unprotected sex or commits “stealth” then the client must be reported to the police.
  - Every sex worker’s first client must take an STD test beforehand.
- **Police officers must be trained in awareness and sensitivity** on matters involving sex work to respond to reports in a serious and informed manner.

## A Humane Prison System

We must ensure that human rights are always respected and that prison is a space for rehabilitation, not punishment. Our goal is to reduce the recidivism rate in Malta and ensure individuals who serve their time in prison rehabilitate into a positive force for our society.

### *Prison & Penalties System*

- **Reorientate the prison system from punishment to rehabilitation.**
  - Adopt best-practice from the Norwegian Model.
- **Ensure that prison conditions always comply with human rights and dignity** regulations, as laid out by Council of Europe standards, and that administrative powers are not used in a discriminatory way.
- **Ensure that prisons are as closely modelled to the outside world** as possible to make reintegration and inclusion easier.
- **Prioritise alternative sanctions** (other than prison, such as community service) for certain non-violent crimes.
- **Ensure the prison education system serves both short- and long-term offenders.**
- **Ban Solitary Confinement.**

## ***Prisoners***

- **Offer psychological treatment and/or psychotherapy for prisoners**, especially for prisoners that suffer from ADHD in combination with substance abuse.
- **Ensure that juveniles are not detained with adults.**
- **Ensure that prisoners undergoing strip searches are searched by same-sex prison officers.**
  - For certain inmates who adhere to strict religious or cultural obligations, all necessary precautions and measures must be adopted not to cross sensitive boundaries.
    - Officers must anticipate these requests beforehand.

## ***Prison Staff***

- **Provide cultural training for prison officers.**
  - All officers should undergo training to learn the techniques needed to work with incarcerated multi-ethnic communities.

# Chapter 2: A beacon of innovation



Gozo and Malta have untapped potential, sadly the way to address it seems to have escaped our nation's leaders. We have a severe mismatch when it comes to job availability and skill quality of our people. To address this we have to take a different approach, no longer should we do business for business' sake, but instead we should inspire ourselves to innovate for the sake of fulfilling ambition and bettering ourselves as a society.

We must address it at the heart, through educational reform as well as providing even those already out of the education system with the knowledge necessary to innovate for themselves. Education should not be a means to an end but rather a time for exploration and discovery of the broader world and all the opportunities one can make use of. This tied with an extensive boost to those tasked with providing this education.

Our plan of action involves a massive reinvigoration in both entrepreneurship and culturalism, two major traits we Maltese have excelled at. By changing how the citizen can approach the business sector, providing assistance and simplifying the process through the technological framework already present we will bring new life to the business sector both in industries we do have as well as new, green and communal industries.

We aim to be a beacon that can attract investors not with tax breaks but rather with well-earned business potential while also bringing citizens of the whole world to participate in the cultural experience of our nation.

# A Critical Education System

Malta's education needs a total shakeup and not piecemeal reform, to be fit for purpose for future generations. Malta's youths need to be well-equipped for the challenges of the 21st Century. The traditional system of memorising information instead of utilising it is past its prime.

## *A Thorough Reimagining*

- **Conduct a holistic review of the totality of Malta's syllabi from primary to post-secondary in collaboration with diverse stakeholders.**
  - Identify excessive information which does not add short or long-term value.
  - Prioritise critical engagement.
  - The transition from a test-based system to an overall assessment one where possible.
  - Prioritise teaching of learning.
  - Ensure facilitation of pedagogical experimentation.
- **Emphasise Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) subjects,** and actively connect to arts and creativity.
- **Increase the emphasis on learning skills and competencies,** e.g. oral communication, public speaking and written skills
- **Introduce classes on media literacy at** primary & secondary levels, that explore creativity and empathy through film, drama and art.
- **Ensure civic education** is sufficient, which teaches how the political system works, at the local, national and European levels.
- **Introduce life competencies class for the 4th year of secondary education** which will cover content such as economics and basic financial literacy, legal basics, social competencies, sustainability, healthy lifestyle, as well as the cooperation of the schools with their local environment.
  - The class should also prepare students for the accredited course on financial literacy.
- **Introduces classes on philosophy** at the secondary level to foster critical thinking.
- **Remove assessments & make homework voluntary** for the following subjects at Primary Level & Secondary level;
  - Religion
  - Ethics
  - Social Studies
  - Drama
  - Art
  - Music
  - PSDC
- **Require schools to teach not more than 1 foreign language** during regular school time at secondary level in addition to Maltese & English. This would be to further increase fluency and proficiency in Maltese & English

- Facilitate additional language learning as an extracurricular activity (e.g after-school lessons)
- **Involve civil society in the design of selected classes and seminars** to ensure that necessary skills are created, and achieve a greater degree of mobility between learning institutions.
  - Involve the private sector to provide apprenticeships more widely.
- **Encourage splitting O levels over 2 years (form 4 & 5)** to minimise cramming & increase learning.
- **Shake-up MATSEC to prioritise less processing & regurgitation** and encourage more 'analysing' in its construction of exams to ensure broader implementation of critical thinking skills.
- **Invest in 'Ethics' teachers.** Work to increase the number of teachers who can study 'Master of Education in Teaching of Ethics in Schools' at the University of Malta from 10 to 20-30 per year, until there are enough potential educators to supply Malta's schools.
  - Temporarily reduce tuition fees by 50% for the duration.
  - Ensure Ethics teachers can start working with a relevant Bachelor's degree.
- **Ensure 'Religion'** informs perspectives of different religions on topics discussed in an objective and unbiased manner, and preferably also through professionals.
- **Ensure Inclusivity & Anti-Racism** are part of the curriculum to become a teacher and also for continuous development, to also facilitate discussing potentially sensitive subjects such as colonialism, therefore a good understanding of decoloniality may be beneficial.
- **Create a community space** within schools in which symbols and information of different religions are added, and respected.
  - Ensure that at minimum, the school includes symbols that represent the religions of the students present.
- **Create special programs of integration** for migrant children to help them adjust to a new culture, language, and environment.

## ***Educators***

- **Increase the starting salary of educators to €30,000 over a period of time.** To incentivise potential educators, retention, and combat the shortage.
  - Adjust wage increases correspondingly.
- **Ensure extracurricular engagement and overtime** is compensated fairly.
- **Invest in emotional support, counselling, psychological guidance and care for teachers** provided by specialised staff and in close collaboration with local medical facilities.
- **Encourage and reward long term commitment by educators.** Give teachers and education practitioners greater say and a voice in setting education policy.

## ***Primary & Secondary Level***

- **Invest in research to find better and more creative ways to teach, like phenomenon-based learning**
  - teaching by topic peer-to-peer learning, more experimental approaches, value-based education, and competence thinking to facilitate creativity and imagination.
  - Empower every child to build on strengths while securing minimum standards, and encourage children to learn through leadership, participation and civic awareness.
- **Review neuroscientific and biological research papers on learning**, attention and concentration, e.g. concerning class times, exam times etc. and experiment with new structures of class times.

## ***Infrastructure***

- **Turn education centres into community focal points** for the exchange of ideas.
- **Invest in education centres connected to local artisanship and excellence.**

## ***Intercultural Education Programmes***

- **Create Educational Programmes freely available to the public.** This would increase acceptance towards people who are different, to be able to perceive and also respect diversity.
  - This would tackle matters such as;
    - Language,
    - Religion,
    - Norms & traditions, etc
  - These programmes should ensure as much opportunity as possible to encourage dialogue between persons of different backgrounds.
    - Ensure experts from diverse backgrounds are present to mediate and guide conversations.
  - Introduce the programme to public sector employees, prioritising in the following;
    - Police
    - Educators
    - Military
    - Doctors
  - Facilitate the programmes in the private sector which may be done in mixed settings with public sector employees.
- **Ensure intercultural education** is a unit within appropriate subjects at various levels of the education system.

# Unemployment & “NEETs”

## Dignity

- **Improve the Personal Action Plan** by JobsPlus to make it more inclusive, accessible and successful for persons of different backgrounds.
  - Add financial literacy training.
  - Add ‘planning for the future’.
- **Develop “Regeneration” courses** for the unemployed and NEETs to facilitate reintegration into the educational and workforce system, and help build confidence.
  - Ensure that such courses also make a significant emphasis on highlighting mental health, and facilitating access to mental healthcare services.
- **Ensure awareness and accessibility** of mental healthcare facilities.
- **Study and research outcomes of the YOUTH GUARANTEE 2.0** programme, to create a better 3.0 version of the project.

## Upskilling

- **Offer free/supported educational services** to facilitate obtaining a higher qualification level which would facilitate access to the job market for NEETs and persons unemployed for at least 24 months. Access would be supported by facilitating the purchase of textbooks & a stationary set required for their education, since public education until MQF 6 is free.
  - This service may be used once to obtain an MQF 5 or MQF 6 Qualification in Malta if their current qualification does not suffice for a satisfactory job.
    - The skills that the course provides must be skills that are currently in demand in Malta or Europe. Additionally, it would seek to fill in gaps within the public sector and would be facilitated through work experience.
  - This service may be used a second time to obtain an MQF 5 or MQF 6 Qualification in Malta if their current qualification does not suffice for a satisfactory job.
    - The skills that the course provides must be skills that are currently in demand in Malta or Europe.
    - They may apply for an MQF 7 course, against a 0% interest rate loan which is repayable over 5 years in which the individual is working.
  - This service may be used to obtain a minimum education qualification of MQF 4 and may opt to continue to achieve an MQF 5.
  - This service may be used to obtain an MQF 7 Qualification in Malta if their current qualification does not suffice for a satisfactory job.
    - They may apply for an MQF 7 course, against a -5% interest rate loan which is repayable over 5 years in which the individual is working.
    - The skills that the course provides must be skills that are currently in demand in Malta or Europe. Additionally, it would seek to fill in gaps



within the public sector and would be facilitated through work experience.

# Re-invigorating Tourism & Culture

Tourism is the bread and butter of a significant portion of Malta's population. The pandemic has significantly hit the industry but presents an opportunity for change.

## Air Connections

- **Set up direct flights to/from Malta & North America through Malta Med Air.** (Such as Florida, New York, Toronto) to increase the quantity of high-value tourism, and incentivise further FDI.

## Tourism

- **Create a *Diaspora Pass* card for persons residing abroad who are Maltese Citizens & persons of Maltese descent.** It will provide the following benefits:
  - Free access to museums;
  - Free bus/boat fares;
  - 10% Discount on Maltese owned cultural, souvenir stores, and events;
  - 10% Discount on accommodation bookings.
- **Facilitate the creation of a cooperative** for nightlife workers to withstand future shocks to the industry caused by unforeseen events such as the pandemic.

## Hospitality

- **Create a 3 level system for Eco-Certification System** by the Malta Tourism Authority. This would be supported by a Tax-Rebate to incentivise attainment.
  - Bronze level: Fulfils all the Mandatory Criteria
    - 1% Tax Rebate
  - Silver level: Fulfils all the Mandatory Criteria & Half of the Voluntary Criteria (Current Standard)
    - 2% Tax Rebate
  - Gold level: Fulfils all the Mandatory Criteria, all the Voluntary Criteria
    - 4% Tax Rebate

## Air Malta

- Conduct a partial IPO to incentivise accountability and shareholder activism.

## ***Create an Artist Commune***

To empower and unleash Malta's artistic potential. Furthermore to encourage cultural tourism. Examples are such as Lx Factory (Portugal), Užupis (Lithuania), Montmartre (France) & Freetown Christiania (Denmark).

- **Locate and support the establishment of an Artist Commune** space for Malta's artists.
  - A suggested location; White Rocks.
- **Facilitate the creation of inclusive cooperation of cooperatives and/or societies of cooperatives** for artists and creatives of different types who would reside and/or work in the area.
- **Create a sustainable development plan** led by the artist cooperative and includes but is not limited to;
  - Accommodation for residents, prioritising accommodation for members of the artist cooperative;
  - Accommodation for tourists, operated by the artist cooperative;
  - Exhibitions operated by the artist cooperative;
  - Retail outlets operated by the artist cooperative;
  - Eateries which would be operated by persons both from the commune;
  - Other.
- **Ensure minimal government interference** in direction of development to ensure organic creation.
  - The government would be involved by ensuring health and safety standards are met & support the development of the space sustainably.
- **Provide grants for projects** proposed by the cooperatives/societies, which would be overlooked by an integrity pact.

## ***Malta's Multicultural History***

- **Create a Museum of Mediterranean Cultures** displaying Malta's cultural development and influences from various cultures, based on history and events.
  - Cooperate with cultural authorities from countries and areas which have influenced Malta's cultural heritage.

# Cybersecurity

## Infrastructure

- **Invest in increasing government cybersecurity infrastructure capabilities** to ensure minimum disruption to operations in the event of an attack.
- **Invest in the Cyber-Crime Unit** capabilities to investigate crimes and to cooperate with government departments on how to prevent them from recurring.
  - **Recruit ethical hackers** to ensure the unit can help in;
    - Identifying vulnerabilities,
    - Anticipating attacks;
    - Investigating attacks;
  - **Foster cooperation with the Armed Forces of Malta.**
  - **Foster a closer cooperation** with the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity, and the European Cybercrime Centre.

## Education

- **Introduce basic courses on practices ensuring cyber security in the workplace & home.** The course should address the basic principles of navigating the digital space to ensure data integrity.
  - Make the classes mandatory for the public sector.
  - Encourage the private sector to utilise the course.
  - Introduce certification valid for 6 years.
    - Persons who have achieved a higher qualification in cyber security are exempted from doing the course for 12 years after completing their course.
  - A higher level course would be introduced voluntarily, however mandatory for individuals responsible for sensitive data.
- **Introduce a Bsc & Msc in Cybersecurity at the University of Malta.**
- **Ensure cyber security education** at the primary & secondary levels is reviewed annually.
  - The educational material should be adapted to the student's age.
  - The course should be delivered in a hands-on manner, and address the tools most often used by the students, and adult population. Ensure the students are given practical examples & training experience. For example;
    - Security & privacy tools of emails, social media platforms, and other services.
    - Identifying scams and phishing emails/text messages.

# A Modern & Social Business Environment

We are in the midst of the 4th Industrial Revolution and the Government has the responsibility of ensuring a fair and accessible playing field and facilitating local businesses in keeping up with the changes taking place, not to risk falling behind.

## *Digitalisation*

- **Expand the "One-Stop-Shop for Business - Business 1st"** to facilitate any type of business & for further interactions between businesses & Government to be done digitally.
  - **Functionality.** The digital system should make it possible to;
    - Automate and simplify financial & data reporting;
    - Update and amend Shareholder records;
    - Handle fees & tax-related affairs, such as Corporate Tax, Value Added Tax and More
  - **Accessibility.** The registry should be accessible to all business types based and headquartered in Malta, including but not limited to;
    - Limited Liability Companies;
    - Partnerships;
    - Cooperatives;
    - More.
  - **Scope.** Ensure it can facilitate various business directions.
    - Cross-border business operations & strategies across the European Single Market & World,
    - Entrepreneurs with multiple start-ups & businesses.
  - **Scale.** Ensure it is equipped to support SMEs and start-ups among other business models.
    - Navigating legal requirements,
    - Venture capitalist and network access,
    - Incubators.
- **Registration Process**
  - **Reduce all costs to start a business** of any type to €1.
    - Ensure any additional costs (licences etc) to operate the business across Europe do not exceed €1,000.
  - **Unleash Self-Employment/ Freelancers.**
    - Ensure that a Self-Employed individual can locate and submit all documents required within a day, and can start working the following day.

- Exceptions exist where specific licences are required (e.g food handling), which should be obtainable within as short a period as possible without loss of quality.
  - Ensure that the online platform to register is user friendly.
  - Ensure that the same online platform can be used by Maltese citizens, non-Maltese EU citizens and third-country nationals with residence or work permits.
- **Unleash Micro-Enterprises**
  - Micro-Enterprises should be able to register and commence completely paperless & within 3 days.
    - Exceptions exist where specific licences are required (e.g food handling), which should be obtainable within as short a period as possible without loss of quality.

## ***Business Incubators***

- **Create a Business Incubator Network.** Interlink Malta's public & private incubators, to support start-ups with a wide array of information, options and tools.
  - **Foster diverse private incubators.**
    - **Tax-reduction incentives** for advisory roles to start-ups.
      - Performance-based incentive.
    - **Tax-reduction incentives** for businesses making use of private incubators.
      - Participation-based incentive.
  - **Create a private-public incubator** to facilitate European expansion. This would exist for established companies in Malta which primarily operate in Malta (75% + of revenues), to accelerate their European Expansion.

## ***Venture Capital Investment***

- **Create an accredited Angel Investors & Venture Capital Firms Network.** To ensure funding from highly experienced sources who have a strong familiarity with Malta's and/or European Single Market business landscape.
- **Facilitate the creation of Venture Capital Firms.**
  - Reduced Capital Gains tax on investments in Malta-based companies

## ***Small Businesses***

- **Create Tax-Incentives for new SMEs for up to 3 years** if they continuously create jobs or re-invest surplus.
- **Create incentives for Employee Stock Options.**

## Cooperatives

Cooperatives offer rigid structures which are capable of coping with shocks to the economy very effectively, relative to other models. The legislation regulating them is outdated and requires significant modernisation.

- **Fiscal incentives.** Create fiscal incentives to encourage Cooperatives on a level playing field with other business models.
  - **Tax Credits & Grants.**
- **The Cooperative Societies Act**
  - **New Legal Framework.** To update the 20-year-old legislation and make it fit for purpose, for the current economic realities
  - **Ensure 'One member One vote' principle.**
  - **Enable Societies** - Cooperatives between diverse entity types.
  - **Reduce the minimum number of members required to 3 from 5.** To increase accessibility and align with international trends.
  - **Ensure representation of Cooperatives** in the Enterprise Consultative Council, the Small Business Advisory Committee and the College of Regulators.
  - **Revise discriminatory legislation.**
- **Enable Community Cooperatives.**
  - This would facilitate members of a community investing in a good collectively for the benefit of the community.
- **Enable Home & Housing Cooperatives.**
  - This would enable individuals living, or aiming to live with a building to pool resources together effectively and allow greater flexibility on types of housing.
- **Ensure Cooperatives are part of the relevant educational curriculum.**
- **Foster Social Enterprise Educational Courses at Tertiary level.**

## Malta Stock Exchange

In an effort to encourage listings & liquidity in Malta's Stock Exchange, a process of privatisation should take place with a qualified strategic partner.

- **Create & execute a Privatisation Strategy** for the Malta Stock Exchange in collaboration with current, and also potential stakeholders with the following conditions;
  - Introduction of an experienced 'Strategic Partner'
  - Increasing accessibility for SMEs to be listed
  - Increasing accessibility for traders to participate in the market
  - Increasing internationalisation of investors
  - Creating a bastion for North African, Middle Eastern & European companies
  - Overseen by an Integrity Pact
  - Short-selling
  - Introduction of Derivatives, Options, Futures & FTEs
  - Modernisation

## **Corporate Income Tax**

The pandemic has had a significant impact on numerous Maltese companies. Malta's corporate tax is among the highest in the world and can be a significant barrier for numerous businesses to become viable. To support small businesses & medium Maltese businesses, we shall aim to reduce the income tax, which currently is the highest in Europe. In so doing though, we will aim to ensure that the quantities paid by mainly foreign companies registered in Malta remain the same as previously.

- **Reduce the Corporate Income Tax to 28% for Maltese-run businesses.**
  - Amend the tax refund & credit systems to ensure that the rate paid by the companies benefiting from them, is still effectively the same as when the corporate tax was 35%.
    - e.g if the company was paying 5% effective tax, the company will continue to pay 5% effective tax.

## **New Markets & Industries (Robotics + Vertical & Urban Farming)**

Intending to diversify Malta's economy and research sector, we want to incentivise the growth of 2 industries that have high growth and innovation potential. Furthermore, the incentives into farming are a step towards ensuring greater food security in anticipation of possible disruptions to future supply chains caused by climate change, and unpredictable events (such as a pandemic).

It is crucial to continuously adapt to the environmental changes brought about by climate change and also to further work towards ensuring food security to whatever extent possible. Additionally, every small act which reduces reliance on imported food products is a benefit to both the environment and local growers.

### **Robotics**

- **Invest in research in developing & applying robotics** to increase productivity and quality in existing industries (Financial Services, Financial Technologies, Gaming, Manufacturing, Agriculture).
- **Foster an advanced robotics industry** by creating a strategy in coordination with Malta's industry stakeholders, educational institutions, entrepreneurial community, and international experts.

## Vertical Farming

The types of vertical farming (Hydroponic, Aquaponic and Aeroponic) should be incentivised to be adopted in Malta, to ensure food security with ever decreasing arable land.

- **Incentivise Research** in different vertical farming methods and how to maximise production & quality, while minimising water & energy consumption taking into consideration Malta's climate.
  - **Research** should also include anticipating the effects of climate change and preparing mitigation strategies.
- **Support Malta's farmers** in introducing vertical farming in their existing infrastructure.
  - **Create Grants** to facilitate the purchase of equipment to set up a vertical farm, for up to 3,000 farmers a year.
    - **The Grant can be claimed by independent farmers & tenant farmers.**
      - The equipment purchased by the Grant would be the property of the farmers unless the conditions of the Grant are not met.
    - **Make the Grant conditional** to ensuring sustainability in production where possible such as through making use of as much as possible.
      - Recycled & Rainwater.
      - Renewable Energy.
- **Foster and also provide expertise** to farmers wishing to adopt vertical farming practices through local and also international sources with experience in similar climates.
- **Foster Start-Ups** aiming to innovate vertical farming.
  - Identify an abandoned building in the public or private sector and establish a hub to be used by start-ups.
    - Modifying the building ensures access to required amenities, and is done sustainably.

## Urban & Community Farming/Gardening

By encouraging and fostering urban & community farming/gardening the public will learn valuable skills on tending to various plants and also produce some of their own which they may share with the community or keep for themselves further saving them money.

- **Encourage** the public to make use of urban farming techniques where possible.
- **Incentivise Research** in different urban farming methods for different types of buildings, and how to maximise production & quality, while minimising water & energy consumption taking into consideration Malta's climate.
  - Ensure research for different quantities of sun exposure.
- **Foster Community Cooperatives** who commit to take care of roof gardens in their rented residences, particularly for apartments.
  - **Encourage bookkeeping standards** of produce created from Urban Farming, for statistical analysis and compensation schemes.



- **Create a verification system** for spot-checks by a committee made up of urban farming experts to help validate the data.
- **Create safeguards** for buildings with urban farms/gardens on roofs (and additionally solar panels) to ensure accessibility to sunlight, or fair compensation at the expense of the developer who would be responsible for the construction of the building taking away access to sunlight.
  - Fair compensation for urban farms/gardens would be;
    - A lump sum is given to the Community Cooperative, or homeowner equivalent to the value of the roof garden, and the market value of produce generated from the space in an average year based on data collected by the bookkeepers.
    - Financing the modification of the urban farm/garden to accommodate for reduced access to sunlight (only if possible, otherwise fall back to lump sum)
  - Fair compensation for solar panels would be;
    - A lump sum of the value of the solar panels will be given to the owner/s, which would be calculated as follows;
      - The remaining lifespan (or up to additional 30 years, depending on which is less) of the solar panels would, as a fraction of the total lifespan of the solar panels, multiplied by the value at which the solar panels were purchased. Then add the monetary value of expected electricity generated by the solar panel within the remaining expected lifespan of the panel.
        - e.g if the solar panel is 11 years old and is expected to be viable for 30 years in total, and the panel was purchased at €2,000 and generates €300 worth of electricity a year on average, then the calculation is as follows
          - $(\frac{19}{30} \times €2,000) + (€300 \times 19) = €6966.67$
- **Create Community Gardens.** Utilise existing, and create new public spaces within localities which will include Community Garden sections within them. This would allow members of the community to come together and work towards taking care of the garden and reap the fruit of their labour.
  - Ensure the community garden is composed of indigenous plants.
  - Ensure there are cameras to ensure the plants are not uprooted & stolen/vandalised
    - Ensure strict enforcement & fines for any criminal acts.
  - Provide community learning sessions on tending the plants.
  - Place the community gardens under the responsibility of the respective local councils.
    - Ensure the local councils are equipped with the capacity to manage the gardens.

# Gozo Business Diversification

Gozo presents a lot of unique opportunities, which have yet to be properly unleashed. We ought to encourage people living in Gozo to work in Gozo. Furthermore, it presents an opportunity to create a niche environment for Malta's growing start-up industry.

- **Create a Private-Public Business Incubator for Gozo.**
  - This may exist in part of the Gozo Innovation Hub
  - Prioritise Digitalisation & Innovation of existing industries.
  - Facilitate niche industries.
- **Create an Agritech business incubator in Gozo.**
- **Incentivise the research and adoption of agroecological practices** to promote the viability of soil.
- **Increase accessibility to, and within Gozo.**
  - **Increase bikeability.**
    - Create additional bike lanes.
    - Ensure island-wide bike-sharing facilities exist.
  - **Improve the Bus Network.**
    - Facilitate the creation of more, regular bus routes
    - Utilise smaller busses for the less traffic intensive routes
    - Broaden the duration of operations and expand the night bus routes.
- **Encourage use of the Gozo Innovation Hub**
  - For the first 2 years, rental prices for Maltese-run start-ups should be free.
  - For the following 3 years, rental prices for Maltese-run start-ups should be half.
- **Facilitate the creation of an Artist Hub** to support Gozo-based artists.

# Chapter 3: A model of sustainability

# 3

As is the running call of our campaign, we must think differently. In this chapter, we put forward the call to turn towards sustainability over endless growth. We must pace ourselves in the way in which we use our land and how we consume not just as individuals but as a society in our totality.

An overhaul of how we view transport is necessary if we are to reduce emissions and also tackle the ever-growing congestion that plagues our roads. We must recognise that the infrastructure that has been built and that continues to be built prioritises a culture of unsustainable consumption. Instead, we push to reframe the development of infrastructure to one that promotes low to 0 emissions. By fostering a new look on the way we travel and facilitating it to happen we can achieve the goal we set out to achieve.

We have to push ourselves beyond arbitrary expectations. Green energy is not simply a viable alternative but a necessity for the future. Seeking out new strategies should not be written off and replaced with shady deals but instead heavily investigated and invested in properly and transparently.

A new model of environmental and social sustainability through greener and reformed infrastructure is the only way forward to maintain and improve the continued habitability of our country.

# A Forward-Looking Transport System

Before committing to a massive decision and jumping to a project, it is important to look into every possible solution and make an informed decision that can't be disputed for lack of research or consideration of other options.

## *An innovative way forward*

- **Initiate a national research project in the viability** of having **just** and also **every combination possible** of the following modes of transport in Malta.
  - Metro system
  - Tram system
  - Light rail system
  - Ferry system
  - Rapid Bus Transit system
- **Include the introduction of a one-card system** for all public transport alongside the national research project, promoting accessibility/ease of access.
- **Considering the following factors;**
  - Cost to establish
  - Return of Investment Duration
  - Change in Car-Use
  - Environmental Impact/Benefit
- **Ensure both Malta and Gozo** are included within any research.
- **Conduct the research with an Integrity Pact** to ensure the research is done fairly and transparently.
- **Consider both the scenarios in which a Malta-Gozo tunnel exists or doesn't** with the integration of the possible mode of transport.
- **Ensure all data is publicly accessible digitally**, up to date, and also physically available on request.
- **Set a 4-year deadline for the research**
  - Ensure new data is published publicly every 6 months, in Spring and Autumn.
  - Extend the deadline for 2 years if research is incomplete.

## *Malta-Gozo road tunnel*

- **Pause the Malta-Gozo road tunnel project** and wait until the studies are complete.
  - The Malta-Gozo tunnel may not be a viable solution if the studies show that the best solution does not involve any Malta-Gozo tunnel.

## *Pedestrian*

- **Conduct research** on the state of Malta's pedestrian space.

- **Expand the 'Slow Streets' project to more localities.**
- **Transition into permanent pedestrianisation of village cores.**
- **Create a Walkable Malta.**
  - **Ensure shaded pavement** to whatever extent possible. The choice of shade will be in the following order of priority according to possibility.
    - Natural shade (Flora that can grow, or already exists that covers pedestrian space.)
      - When creating additional natural shade, ensure flora is indigenous.
    - Artificial shade
      - Artificial shade should also take into consideration different weather events (ensure it is effective when it rains)
  - **Ensure pavement is accessible** to individuals who use wheelchairs and pushchairs.
    - If the space is occupied with bags pending garbage collection, seek out alternative waste collection solutions.
  - **Ensure pavement is maintained**, to ensure it is usable by all individuals, especially those who make use of wheelchairs, pushchairs, blind individuals, and other possible situations.

## ***Bicycles, Electric Scooters***

- **Ensure bike-sharing is possible nationwide.**
  - Create grants to set up bicycle parking stations in more locations.
- **Set up more bicycle parking stations** across Malta for privately-owned bicycles.
- **Ensure strict penalties** tied to the driving licence of individuals who use the priority lane illegally.
- **Create effective security barriers for bicycle lanes** that are adjacent to the road to protect individuals using the alternative routes.
- **Expand the bikeability of Malta.** Cooperate with NGOs to expand the network of roads usable by alternative methods.
  - Ensure road networks between localities are safe for individuals commuting with alternative transport.
- **Any road expansion must only be possible if it first creates a safe bicycle lane zone**, and secondly the space for priority lanes, thirdly for regular automobiles.
- **Solve existing road bottlenecks**, especially those inflicted by recent road expansions, by slimming the roads around the bottlenecks, and adopting a safe bicycle lane where possible.
- **Enforce laws pertaining to bicycles & electric scooters.**
- **Introduce Presumed Liability for motor vehicle users** to provide cyclists legal protection.
- **Introduce government-funded personal and vehicular insurance** for bicycle users.
- **Increase lighting** for footbridges, alleyways and other roads not sufficiently lit for evenings.
- **Ensure widespread setup of Sheffield Bicycle Racks** across Malta and Gozo.

- **Introduce Contraflow exemptions** for cyclists akin to those for buses.

## **Busses**

- **Work towards a 24/7 bus system.** To effectively increase uptake of public transport.
  - **Regular bus schedules should continue** until midnight.
  - **Ensure a consistent, nationwide, night bus schedule.**
    - Maintain the current night bus routes.
    - Create routes for every locality in Malta that is serviced hourly.
- **Increase the number of priority lanes**, ensure they are considered during road expansion after bicycle lanes and before regular roads.

## **Roads**

- **Develop conditionalities for when road expansion** may/may not be acceptable.
  - Ensure a condition is that the road must attempt other modes of increasing connectivity through 0/low emissions mobility first.
- **Create metered parking** in, and around village cores.
- **For individuals who own 2 or more vehicles, and do not have enough garage space to accommodate all cars**, create a regular penalty fee for every car the individual can not accommodate in a garage space, excluding the primary car. The annual penalty will be €1,500 per year, per car.
  - E.g If the person owns 2 cars but has no garage space or has only 1 garage space, they are penalised for 1 car.
  - If the person owns 4 cars but has no garage space or only 1 garage space, they are penalised for 3 cars.
    - If the person has 2 garage spaces they are penalised for 2 cars.

## **Fossil Fuel Free Personal Vehicles**

- **Ban the use of fossil fuels in road vehicles by 2035.** This does not ban the sale or use of internal combustion engines as long as they burn biofuels or synthetic fuels.
- **Facilitate conversion of internal combustion engines** which can process biofuels or synthetic fuels.
  - Ensure nationwide access to biofuels and synthetic fuels.
- **Conduct research on the potential** demand for fuel for Hydrogen-powered vehicles.
  - Involve research to map out nationwide coverage for hydrogen fuel stations within existing fuel stations
    - Ensure that there is not more than 1 hydrogen fueling station per locality.

# Construction & Development

## *New Developments*

*Lack of insulation in homes means the building can not maintain a consistent temperature. So when temperatures peak (heat or cold) so does the temperature inside buildings. This as a result causes people to spend money on heating (electric, gas, air conditioning) or cooling (air conditioning).*

- **Require insulated walls & windows** for new developments, which ensure a more stable temperature during the cold winter and hot summer months, reducing energy consumption, and therefore expenses.
  - **Failure to include insulation results in a substantive fine** to the developers equivalent to the cost of insulating the property.

## *Refurbishments*

- **Provide Grants** for insulation for households that want to and are eligible to insulate their homes.
  - For buildings built in 2021 and earlier.
- **Provide Grants** for insulation for developers who choose to refurbish a property.

## *Framework*

- **Revise the 2006 Local Plans** in collaboration with various stakeholders, including civil society & locality representatives.
  - Ensure the Local Plans are in line with the present realities and environmental objectives of the European Union.
- **Create and enforce strict rules** for new developments, regarding where, when and how they are to be built, and, taking into account the following conditions among others;
  - Ensure there is a design style implemented for localities and streets which must be adhered to;
  - Stricter & lower ceiling levels to ensure a more consistent style;
  - Stricter protections for village cores;
  - Incentivise refurbishment & punish unreasonable demolition
- **Create additional safeguards against expropriation.** The landowner/s and occupier/s must be given at least a 2 months notice before expropriation starts.
  - If the land is farmland, then at least 4 months' notice must be given.
  - If an appeal is filed, any work must be halted until the appeal has been resolved.
  - Any plans for expropriation must fairly compensate the landowners in advance.
    - If the occupier is a farmer then they must also receive fair compensation.

- **ODZ land must remain ODZ land.** Any developer breaching the integrity of ODZ land will be greylisted from being able to take on any new development projects for 1 year.
  - A repeated breach blacklists the developer from public procurement for 10 years.

# New Energy Solutions

## *Wave Energy*

Malta is undoubtedly very limited in the types and quantities of energy it can produce however it must continue to strive to make the most of technological breakthroughs that it can make use of.

- **Conduct Research** on generating wave energy in Malta
  - Gather information on the following;
    - Most effective method and sustainable method;
    - Potential generation;
    - Location with the most potential.
  - Ensure past research is used to compare to the present situation.
- **Establish a wave farm** in both Malta and Gozo based on the results of the research.

## *Hydrogen Energy*

Keeping the status quo with Electrogas is untenable. The government needs to step up, without any half-measures.

- **Work to cancel the Electrogas deal consider working towards nationalising the assets**
  - Take steps to ensure that contracts are made public, investigate to identify corruption, and are brought forward to the courts for annulment where possible.
  - Ensure that any nationalisation process has little to no disruption of Malta's energy supply
  - In the event of successful nationalisation;
    - Conduct a feasibility study with close involvement of civil society groups, to adopt a renewable energy solution of Electrogas
    - Following the study take steps through an integrity pact for a strategic partner of Electrogas for renewable gas solutions, primarily focused on green hydrogen
- **Conduct transparent Research on the** viability of a Green Hydrogen Power Station in Malta.
  - Conduct a partial IPO in the event of a Green Hydrogen Power Station.
- **Ensure that any new** gas pipeline from Sicily to Malta is generated through renewable means.
  - If a Hydrogen pipeline will be proposed, it must be Green Hydrogen based.



- **Work to ensure that the energy coming from the first, and upcoming second interconnector is increasingly green** and that statistical data is published on its composition.

# Chapter 4: No one left behind

# 4

If we are going to move forward as a society we must move forward as one. We work together for the common good of all and not for the betterment of a select few. To this effect we push for the demand to improve the standard of acceptable living standards.

We mistreat ourselves by neglecting the needs that in truth many of us are in dire need for. The struggles faced by most of our nation's workers have been harsh, we must make sure that all workers are provided with compensation as it is not only well earned but their right as the ones sacrificing for their efforts for the success of us all.

We must also put light on those our systems seem to ignore and even abuse. The inequality faced by migrants, couples and homeless kept invisible through the system's rejection of their existence means that we still have much to do before we can truly claim that all members of our society are served.

Our understanding of who is part of our society must change. We are kept so alienated and unaware of one another by the weight of stress caused just for the simple fact of surviving. We must put our resources and our technologies towards making sure that all people can benefit and live meaningful lives

# Mental Healthcare

## *Mental Health First Aid*

The more individuals are trained in mental health first aid, the more effective the community can help someone in need.

- **Work toward widespread adoption of Mental Health First Aid** accreditation among the following professions (among others) in the public sector;
  - Educators
  - Police
  - Nurses
  - Firefighters
  - Human Resource
- **Encourage Mental Health First Aid** accreditation within the private sector.
- **Facilitate the creation** of more training centres for Mental Health First Aid.

## *National Mental Health Care Access and Framework*

- **Implement and focus on community-based care**, that could be split into three parts:
  - Getting patients the medical and psychological care that they need.
  - Medical and psychological care, any patient or person struggling with mental health issues or illness and undergoing treatment should be given focus on strengthening certain life skills to avoid relapses or reliance on medication and clinical care.
  - A mix of preventive and rehabilitative care (involving the work of other departments such as social workers, employers, etc. to ensure the underlying issues are tackled).
- **Ensure the mental health framework focuses on both prevention of mental health difficulties, and empowerment** for those who are already struggling – access to basic needs and care must be guaranteed.
- **Pair the increase of services with comprehensive research into the root causes of mental health struggles** and their socioeconomic effects – e.g. financial difficulties, social isolation, discrimination, long-term stress, unemployment etc.
- **Mental Healthcare Access:**
  - **A full Psychiatric Wing**, with complete psychiatry and psychology services, must be made available and accessible at Mater Dei.
  - **Also set up an emergency psychiatric unit** at Mater Dei hospital, ensuring that any person going through a mental health crisis has access to any and all of the specialists/services they need - including, but not limited to, social workers, psychologists, nurses, and/or psychiatrists.

- **Psychiatric/psychological services should also be available** through local clinics to whatever extent possible.
  - Psychiatrists and psychologists could go on rotation to local clinics, depending on their and nearby localities.
- **Train GPs to pick up physiological symptoms of mental illness or distress**, and make the necessary referrals to mental health specialists where necessary.
- **Remodel Mount Carmel Hospital** shifting focus to patients that require long-term care (with possible renaming to signify the change).
  - A communication system would be established between Mount Carmel and the smaller clinics/care centres.
  - **Part of Mount Carmel Hospital would be renovated into a community and cultural centre**, which focuses on rehabilitation, community participation, and acquiring new coping skills (arts, sports, etc.) for those who do not work or are still in recovery but no longer require intensive care (from Mount Carmel and smaller clinics).
    - This centre can require both internal and external community focus, with collaborations from other NGOs with leaflets, demonstrations, etc., to assist community outreach through a safe environment.
- **Develop 4 smaller peer-support and community-care clinics to be set up across the island** - one in the North, one in the Centre, and one in the South; as well as one in Gozo.
  - Implement collaborative management with local NGOs.
  - Focus more on peer support and community-care, rather than just medical diagnosis, providing a multidisciplinary approach to patient recovery – however, the professionals can refer patients to medical care if required.
  - Coordination with rehab centres in Malta and Gozo should also be implemented, empowering recovering substance abuse patients to receive mental health support if needed.
  - These clinics could also form as bases for multidisciplinary teams, which focus on 24/7 responsive care and tailoring available mental health services to their community's specific needs.
- More care support for families and carers, as well as the implementation of home visits and, stays in cooperation with doctors and carers of patients.
- **Ensure that ALL psychiatric medicine is made available through the Pharmacy of Your Choice scheme**, inclusive of any importation changes or updates.
- **The Ministry of Health should collaborate with importers** to ensure that the right medicines are being imported, to ensure consistent and adequate medical care for carers and patients.
  - If any changes to the importation of these medicines have been or need to be made, a communication system should be in place with the

corresponding mental health and psychiatric officials, to coordinate real-time support for high-risk or sensitive patients.

## ***Mental Health Education and Support***

### ➤ **For Schools:**

- **Increase education** of the effects and sources of mental health difficulties and illnesses to be implemented across all schools.
  - May be integrated into the PSCD curriculum.
- **Promote available mental health services.**
- **Ensure a counsellor/counselling team is available** that focuses on the mental health of the students and acts as a bridge between the students and the administration.
- **Teachers and students should be empowered to speak up in cases of classroom discrimination and bullying**, through seminar training, and report to the school counsellor and counselling team.

### ➤ **Workplaces:**

- **Workplaces in both the public and private sectors** should be supported and encouraged to collaborate with mental health professionals and/or NGOs to provide seminars, training in conflict resolution and work-life balance, etc.
- **Unions, councils, and employers' associations** should provide members with information on counselling and support services in times of emotional distress.

## ***Mental Healthcare Access to Minorities***

- **Ensure all third-country nationals and EU citizens** are informed of mental healthcare services in Malta
  - Provide information through Identity Malta.
- **Increase the accessibility and availability of public mental healthcare facilities** by working towards expanding the number of localities providing services to eliminate structural barriers (transport).
- **Conduct a mass media campaign** to inform on the effectiveness of mental healthcare.

## ***Mental Healthcare Access to Youth***

- **Increase the capacity of services such as Kellimni** to increase accessibility to mental healthcare and are integrated within the public mental health care system.
- **Increase the quantity and decentralisation of public mental healthcare** facilities targeted at youths

# Healthcare

## *Pandemic Hazard Pay*

- **Introduce Hazard Pay for healthcare front-liners** who have worked during the pandemic, until the end of the pandemic.
  - Supplement pay by 5% for those who worked 1-12 months in the pandemic.
  - Supplement pay by 10% for those who worked 12+ months in the pandemic.
  - Provide a grant for missed supplement pay before the implementation of this policy.
    - Ensure individuals who have worked during the pandemic but no longer are, receive the grant they are owed.

## *Retention of Workers*

- **Conduct research** on improving retention rates among healthcare workers.
- **Investigate systemic issues** and develop a transparent plan to address them.

## *Blood Donations*

- **Remove the deferral period of MSM individuals**, and focus on limiting individuals who have high-risk sexual contact and not based on individuals' gender or orientation.

# Making a Decent Income

## *A Living Minimum Wage*

A living wage is defined as the minimum income necessary for a worker to meet their basic needs. Basic needs would be defined as; food, housing, transportation, clothing and the ability to save up for emergency expenses.

- **Revise how COLA is calculated.** Develop a progressive system for different income brackets, where the lower the income, the higher the COLA.
- **Every worker in Malta has the right to a Living Wage.**
  - A living wage is a minimum income required for food, housing, transportation, clothing, and also the ability to save for emergency expenses.
    - This should be legally established.
- **Ensure Minimum Wage is at least 60% of the Monthly Median Wage.**
  - Current Gross Monthly Minimum Wage = €792
  - Estimate Gross Monthly Median Wage = ~ €1824.84
  - **Target Monthly Minimum Wage = €1100.**
    - €253.85/week

- €6.35/hour of full time (40hr/week) work
    - ~ 60% to account for possible increases in Median Wage
- **Increase to Minimum Wage to €1100 over 3 years at a rate of €102.45 per month/year.**
  - If the employer can prove that the pace of the increase would impact the viability of the company, the employer may apply for a reduced VAT plan that foresees it increasing to original levels over 5 years.
- **The Minimum Wage is to continuously increase to maintain 60% of the Median Wage until the Living Wage is established.**
- **Create an NSO Directorate for the Living Wage.**
  - The primary responsibility will be to regularly and transparently publish data on a Living Wage in Malta in line with the rights of the worker as detailed in the former point.
  - The Directorate will submit a recommendation for a Living Wage 6 months before the expected annual national budget starting from the year 2025.
    - The Government will be obligated to adjust the Minimum Wage accordingly unless the received figure is below 60% of the Median Wage, then the latter is adopted.
- **Introduce a free public accredited course** for persons age 15 years and over, on financial literacy on the following subjects
  - Ensure it tackles at least the following subjects;
    - Budgeting,
    - Investing,
    - Personal Finance Management,
    - Taxation;
  - Ensure it can be done remotely.

## **Universal Basic Income**

- **Conduct an experiment in UBI** in Malta to study for 4 years through a cross-section of society, but primarily focused on individuals in, or at risk of poverty & social exclusion.

## **Working Students**

- **Working more than 20 hours should not exclude a student from receiving a maintenance grant.**
- **Allow students to work part-time up to 30 hours per week part-time**, and still be eligible for the Maintenance grant.
- **Reduce the tax rate for full-time students in part-time employment to 0%** for up to 20 hours of work per week.
  - 21-30 hours per week of work are taxed at 5%.

# Pregnancy, Parental Leave & Employment Rights

A new law detailing employment rights and regulation of leave; during pregnancy, from birth, shared leave of parents after their individual leave is utilised, special parental leave, adopting parents and foster carers, will be proposed to replace and harmonise current laws outlined regulating these matters in the following laws:

- **PROTECTION OF MATERNITY (EMPLOYMENT) REGULATIONS - [SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION 452.91](#)**
  - The regulations safeguarding employment rights of pregnant employees, employees who have recently given birth and breastfeeding employees, and 'special maternity leave', will be maintained in the new law.
  - 'Special maternity leave' would be renamed to 'special parental leave'.
  - 'Maternity Leave' taken before birth will be replaced with 'Pregnancy Leave' & 'Maternity Leave' taken from birth will be replaced with 'Individual Parental Leave'
- **MINIMUM SPECIAL LEAVE ENTITLEMENT REGULATIONS - [SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION 452.101](#)**
  - 'Birth Leave' would no longer be required, since any parent would be entitled to 'Individual Parental Leave'
- **PARENTAL LEAVE ENTITLEMENT REGULATIONS - [SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION 452.78](#)**
  - Unless otherwise specified, the right of when a parent may take parental leave as outlined in this regulation will be the same.
  - Unless otherwise specified, the nature of parental leave as outlined in this regulation will be the same.
  - 'Parental leave' as outlined in this regulation will be called 'Shared Parental Leave'
- **ADOPTION LEAVE NATIONAL STANDARD ORDER - [SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION 452.111](#)**
  - Unless otherwise specified, the regulations safeguarding employment rights of persons choosing to adopt will be maintained in the new law.

## *Individual Parental Leave*

*This would replace Maternity, Birth, Adoption Leave.*

- **Every parent has the right to 20 weeks of individual paid parental leave at 100% of their respective income.** This would be paid 50% by the Employer (or up to the equivalent of the current minimum wage) and the rest by the State.
  - **A parent may opt for 25 weeks of individual paid parental leave at 80% of income.**



- **A single parent has the right to paid parental leave equivalent to 2 parents** (40 weeks at 100% of income or 50 weeks at 80% of income)
    - A single parent may opt for 2 different instalments of paid parental leave (e.g 100% pay for 20 weeks and 80% pay for 25 weeks for a total of 45 weeks)
  - **If the parent is self-employed** then individual paid parental leave is fully paid by the State for 20 weeks.
    - If the parent's income is less than the Parental Leave Fund, then they are paid the Parental Leave Fund.
  - **If the parent is unemployed**, they are to be paid the Parental Leave Fund by the state for 20 weeks.
  - **A parent may delegate up to 50% of their Individual Parental Leave to their partner, a guardian or family member**, who would be responsible for taking care of the child if the parent chooses to work. The delegate would be paid the Parental Leave Fund by the State.
- **This right applies to parent/s who opt for adoption or surrogacy.**

## ***Shared Parental Leave***

*This would amend Parental Leave.*

- **Parents have the right to share between them an additional 20 weeks of paid Shared Parental Leave, at 70% of the average income of the parents**, which is calculated for a reference period of 12 calendar months before the calendar month that precedes the start of the benefit to parental allowance. This would be paid by the State.
- **Shared Parental leave is available when at least 100% of 1 parent's leave is utilised and 50% of the other parent's leave is utilised.** To incentivise both parents to use their parental leave
  - Under exceptional circumstances, the requirement can be waived.
  - For single parents, shared parental leave is utilised when their Individual Parental Leave is utilised.
- **The parent/s may delegate any quantity of their Shared Parental Leave to a guardian or family member**, who would be responsible for taking care of the child if the parent/s choose to work, and the delegate would be paid at 50% of the average income of the parent/s but must be at least equivalent to the Parental Leave Fund.
  - This would be paid by the State.
- **If the parent is unemployed**, they are to be paid the Parental Leave Fund by the State.
- **This right applies to parent/s who choose to adopt.**
- **This right applies to Foster Carers.**
- **This can be used until the child is 16.**

## ***Pregnancy Leave***

- **Every couple which involves a pregnancy has the right to 8 weeks of paid Pregnancy Leave each, at 80% of their respective income, that can start from up to 8 weeks before birth**
  - In the event of complications in the pregnancy arising sooner than 8 weeks to the due date, which require that the person does not work, they may request to start their leave sooner, without it affecting their leave benefit, until 8 weeks before birth.
- If the parent is unemployed, they are to be paid the Parental Leave Fund.
- This leave may also be utilised to attend parenting classes.

## ***Parental Leave Fund***

- **The Parental Leave Fund** would be a sum of money provided by the state equivalent to the living wage.

# **Homelessness**

There is no clear legal definition of homelessness in Malta, its different types, and their prevalence in the country. This leads to shortcomings in creating policy to combat homelessness, and also makes it impossible to know the real situation.

## ***Framework***

- **Create a legally recognised definition/s of homelessness.** This should be done in cooperation with organisations such as YMCA, Caritas, MGRM and others.
- **Conduct a well resourced nationwide study.**
  - To identify the number of homeless individuals.
  - To identify the causes of homelessness.
- **Provide a mixture of services to meet needs related to age, gender and special needs.** Addressing the needs of specific groups of vulnerable individuals is fundamental to ensure that they feel comfortable and safe, and implement measures to prevent the prolonging of their homelessness.
- **Provide treatment for drug use and treat addiction as a medical condition** and not a crime.
- **Provide mental health support and social services** to those who have experienced homelessness or social exclusion to tackle conditions that may lead to further alienation and worsening of the situation.
- **Tackle gender-based violence and related gendered causes** of homelessness and address underlying gendered aspects of poverty and homelessness.
- **Reduce the stigma attached to homelessness** through multimedia awareness-raising campaigns.

## Solutions

- **Adopt Housing First approach from Finland.** Providing homeless people with social housing before other rehabilitation steps. These are the following principles:
  - **Housing as a Human Right. (UNHCR)**
  - **Choice and control for service users.** People using the service should be listened to and their opinions should be respected
  - **Separation of housing and treatment.** Housing First ensures the human right to housing is not compromised by requiring service users to engage with treatment either to access housing or to remain in housing.
  - **Recovery orientation.** A service with a recovery orientation focuses on the overall well-being of an individual. This includes their physical and mental health, their level of social support (from a partner, family or friends) and their level of social integration, i.e. being part of a community and taking an active part in society
  - **Harm reduction.** Harm reduction is based on the idea that ending problematic drug and alcohol use can be a complex process and that services requiring abstinence, or detoxification, do not work well for many homeless people
  - **Active engagement without coercion.** Within the harm reduction and recovery orientation of Housing First, the emphasis is always on positively trying to get people using Housing First to engage with the help they need.
  - **Person-centred planning.**
  - **Flexible Support for as Long as is Required.** Support intensity can rise and fall with individual needs so that Housing First can respond positively when someone needs more, or less, help on a day-to-day basis.
- **Encourage businesses to take on long-term unemployed and/or homeless persons** through monetary incentives.

## Migration

Volt believes that only a European solution can solve the most pressing issues related to migration and that a humane approach is fundamental.

### *Asylum Seekers & Refugees*

- **Work to set up a Unified EU Refugee Policy** to define a unified approach to manage refugee flows from outside the EU. Within the EU, some countries are overwhelmingly taking in asylum seekers and refugees.
- **Aim to abolish the 'Dublin principle'** that refugees must apply for asylum in their first EU country of arrival.
- **Aim to create a fair resettlement system.** The Dublin system needs to be and a settlement system must be defined (e.g. based on population, population density, wealth, age, and growth). The amended system should provide for penalties for those countries that do not abide by it.

- **Make the asylum system fair, effective, and quick:**
  - By shortening the time period until the final asylum decision is made.
  - By always providing social, legal, and psychological support with specialised services.
  - By allowing asylum seekers to enter the job market from the very first day.
  - (Asylum seekers are often not given the opportunity to gain employment or partake in other activities. This is problematic on many levels: it is expensive for countries to financially support them, leading asylum seekers to live in dire situations). Asylum seekers are often not given the opportunity to gain employment or partake in other activities. It is expensive for countries to provide them with enough money to live on. Often, insufficient resources are provided, leading asylum seekers to live in dire situations. Additionally, excluding asylum seekers from the workforce for the duration of the asylum procedure does not foster integration. Finally, it is against countries' obligations under international law, human rights law, humanitarian law, and European guidance to support asylum seekers' right to work. Indeed, "without the right to work, all other rights are meaningless (Louis Henkin, U.S. delegate at the drafting of the 1951 Refugee Convention)."
- **Ensure that asylum seekers' and refugees' rights are respected** and that countries uphold their obligations arising out of international treaties.
  - Put an end to the practice of detaining asylum seekers under inhumane conditions. Practices that cause unjustified and undue detention should be stopped.
  - Ensure that the standards for the reception of applicants for international protection are complied with by all European countries
- **Continue the practice of protecting refugees for the duration of the risk. However, offer permanent residence** to refugees after a certain period if they are still at risk (five to seven years) when certain criteria are met (for example clean track record, language skills, and knowledge of key elements of the country). However, refugees should always be encouraged and supported to return to their home countries, if they are safe, to be part of the rebuilding efforts. Immediate permanent integration, however, is required for certain types of refugees, such as unaccompanied minors or refugees with severe trauma from, for example, a conflict situation.
- **Involve the private sector and educational institutions** in fostering integration by designing alternative accreditation systems for undocumented skills and qualifications, offering training courses and language classes, gathering early information to facilitate employment matching, and setting up platforms and communication channels to explain and openly discuss the rights and duties of people living in Europe.
- **Ensure decent housing for every asylum seeker and refugee.** Additionally, incentivise the adoption of decentralised habitations to foster integration, increasing the chance of securing jobs and of creating a new life in the host country
- **Work at the source** and tackle the problems that create refugee crises to prevent them, through international cooperation and diplomacy.

- **Introduce training.** The purpose is to teach the asylum seekers of Malta and Europe's culture and values and to provide them with the opportunity to learn Maltese & English. This should be taught in a language in which the person understands, and this would facilitate integration.
- **Enable reunification** for long-term partners of LGBTIQ+ individuals.

## Migration

- **Work with the EU to strengthen legal channels for migration.** The EU needs to strengthen its legal channels for migration through visa programmes, scholarships, and work permits to avoid readmission agreements, which will in any case only be struck if the EU provides additional development funding to source countries. EU aid could be paid in instalments, and returns could be limited to future arrivals only so that States would not have to worry about a sudden spike in returns when people that are already in Europe are sent back to their country of origin.
- **Support the Victim Support Agency** in combating racism, through educational campaigns, awareness campaigns, and ensuring migrants and minorities are aware of the service.
- **Support Introduce voting rights at the local council level** for third-country nationals with residency.

## Economic Migrants

- **Economic migrants as a temporary workforce.**
  - **Target temporary economic migrants when liberalising labour market mobility.** A policy designed in this respect should facilitate circular labour mobility.
    - Actively assess the impact on the labour market of the Receiving and the Sending States to ensure a balance between the needs and demands. Commitments made should accommodate the outcome of such an analysis and mitigate the negative effects of increased labour mobility.
    - Support the active involvement of relevant stakeholders, such as employers and trade unions, when designing policy on temporary economic migration, both in Sending and Receiving States.
  - **Ensure that a level playing field** is created, in which temporary economic migrants have equal access to justice.
    - Use the expertise of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in designing policies that enable temporary migration of workers which adequately balances the interests of foreign and domestic workers
    - Support national and international prosecution agencies in the fight against human trafficking and in the creation of a global system to report trafficking crimes.
  - **Develop a specific migration visa** that should be made available to temporary foreign workers.

- Visas for temporary foreign workers should be subject to a separate regime. Temporary foreign workers should not be entitled to apply for permanent residency or social security in the Receiving State. In turn, the labour rights of temporary migrant workers should be ensured by ensuring access to medical services, necessary insurances, and legal services, as well as compliance with local labour laws of the Receiving State
- **Economic migrants as a permanent workforce.**
  - Push forward the establishment of a separate administrative procedure for permanent economic migrants, in addition to facilitating temporary economic migration.
  - Support and further develop existing efforts to ease permanent migration for highly skilled migrants, such as the EU Blue Card visa.

## ***Irregular economic migration***

- **Ensure that the fundamental rights** of undocumented migrants across Europe are respected in case of detention and deportation. Ensure that the principle of non-refoulement is upheld.
- **Give particular attention to the rights of minors** within the category of irregular economic migrants. The rights as contained in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child must be respected in all circumstances
- **Facilitate the creation of an administrative system** within and across European countries which allows for the conditional change of status from irregular to the regular economic migrant.
- **Introduce training.** The purpose is to teach the asylum seekers of Malta and Europe's culture & values and to provide them with the opportunity to learn English & Maltese. This should be taught in a language in which the person understands, and this would facilitate integration.