

## **Volt has left us, now we are leaving Volt**

\*\*\*"We are not born equal; we become equal as members of a group on the strength of our decision to guarantee ourselves mutually equal rights." – Hannah Arendt" \*\*

At the Volt Europa General Assembly (GA) in Frankfurt, the majority of the Volt members who voted decided not only to adopt the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism (JDA), but also to reject the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

This outcome showed that the majority in our party decided to ignore the position of the people in Volt who are affected by antisemitism. Volt's Jewish Safer Space made it completely clear in their speeches and statements before and during the GA that they were only in favour of the IHRA and completely rejected the JDA. At the same time, never has any Jewish Volter publicly supported the JDA motion.

We completely respect the democratic outcome of the vote. For us, however, this is fundamentally conflicting with our core values of listening to the ones who are affected. Volt left us, hence we are leaving Volt.

This vote comes at a time when antisemitism has been increasing both inside and outside of Volt. The Jewish community has suffered for years now. There was already a huge wave of antisemitism during the pandemic. Even before October 7, 2023, we witnessed harsh antisemitism in Volt, especially related to the relativisation of the Holocaust and in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. October 7 and the war in Gaza served as a catalyst of antisemitism both inside and outside of Volt.

We witness antisemitism rising especially in areas with very little Jewish population. Therefore, it comes as no surprise to us that the French and German chapters are the most supportive of Volt's Jewish community, as those are the two countries, alongside the UK, with the biggest Jewish population in Europe.

## **Misinformation regarding antisemitism within Volt**

We would also like to counter some misinformation that has been spreading in Volt before and after the results of the IHRA/JDA vote were announced:

The IHRA is adopted by 1,264 entities including 35 countries as well as, for example, the EU – including the vast majority of Jewish communities and organisations worldwide (Please read and watch the video here: [worldjewishcongress.org/en/videos](https://worldjewishcongress.org/en/videos) ...e-than-ever and here you find the member communities of the World Jewish Congress which adopted the IHRA's definition: [worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities](https://worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities)). At the same time, the JDA has only 200 single people as signatories. And while it is true that the JDA was written by academics, the same is true for the IHRA's definition.

"The JDA definition's first public airing was as a complete finished document, complete with two hundred signatories and accompanied by simultaneous advocacy in many media outlets around the globe. No one who wasn't invited by the organizers had any opportunity to contribute to the process, or even to form an opinion, before it was complete. In particular, the EUMC and IHRA, which authored and maintain the current definition, do not appear to have even been made aware that a new definition was in work. And the surprise release happened two days before Passover, when a lot of Jews have other things on their minds. If they wished to create a document with an 'authoritative voice', which could 'unite all forces' against antisemitism, the organizers made a very large mistake by engaging in a secret process and leaving important voices out" (see page 12 here [report-antisemitism.de/documents/2](https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/2) ...Paper-2.pdf; originally from Allyn-Feuer: The JDA Definition is Completely Incoherent: [engageonline.wordpress.com/2022/03/1](https://engageonline.wordpress.com/2022/03/1) ...lyn-feuer). This also begs the question how this process can be in line with the fact-based approach that Volt claims to uphold.

Moreover, the Volt Europa Board hired external consultants to work out how to deal with the existing antisemitism within Volt. And these experts recommended adopting and implementing the IHRA's definition of antisemitism. Still, not one person from the Volt Europa leadership openly supported the IHRA, which we find astonishing.

The IHRA does not declare all criticism of Israel as antisemitism. Hence, it does not limit free speech. Hereinafter a direct quote from the IHRA's definition: "Criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic." This also includes Israeli settler violence, as the Jewish Safer Space has publicly explained several times before.

## **Tokenism within Volt**

In politics, "tokenism" means placing someone from a marginalised group in a symbolic role to create an appearance of diversity, without actually changing the real power structures. The image of the group or opinion that this tokenised person is allegedly "representing" is even more distorted when the tokenised person is from a minority within a minority, but is treated as if they were representing the entire group. An example would be inviting a queer person who opposes marriage for all to speak as "the queer voice", even though most queer people support it.

Tokenism distorts reality even more when the tokenised person's voice is amplified only in those cases that fit the narrative of the people in power who tokenised this person from a minority. Subsequently, the tokenised person's voice is ignored by those in power when it does not fit their narrative. In this context, it is important to note that David Feldman, the JDA scholar who was invited to speak at the GA by the Volt Europa Board, was explicit about the misconceptions that come along with the terms "Zionism" and "anti-Zionism" (see Feldman's point during the panel discussion at the GA at 6:08:17 h: [youtube.com/live/gL7CkOG1iLE](https://youtube.com/live/gL7CkOG1iLE) ...3p1jeoWnF&t=22097). However, the meaning of "Zionism" continues to be demonised instead of discussed constructively. At the same time, the very same people selectively quote Feldman when it seemingly supports their argument.

Apart from that, not only was the Jewish community within Volt not listened to, but false assumptions and claims were made as to where the Jewish Safer Space stands on the atrocities done to Palestinians by the Israeli government. This way the Jewish Safer Space has been stigmatised in order to enforce a political agenda by those spreading this defamation.

### **Unequal treatment of the Jewish Safer Space by the Volt Europa Board**

Not a single Jewish Volter has publicly supported the JDA, not even now after the GA vote. This is also why no Jewish Volt member has agreed to join the "task force regarding antisemitism" proposed by the Volt Europa Board, as it solely exists to implement the JDA (because the IHRA's definition was rejected completely by the majority of voters).

The Volt Jewish Safer Space's refusal to join the task force stems from repeated unequal treatment by the Volt Europa Board. Here is one recent example out of many over the years: On October 21, 2025, Volt's Jewish Safer Space was asked to propose speakers for the panel discussion "How to talk about Israel and Palestine while keeping Volt a Safe Space", which was organised by the Volt Europa Board at the GA in Frankfurt. On the same day, the Jewish Safer Space submitted a list of potential speakers that included Jewish/Israeli and Palestinian voices, even though they were not explicitly asked to include Palestinians.

On November 3, the Board told the contact person from the Jewish Safer Space that none of the suggested speakers had been contacted. Instead, the Jewish Safer Space was given a budget with which they were told to reach out to the potential speakers themselves. The Jewish Safer Space was also informed that two speakers had already been confirmed – one of whom was arbitrarily assumed to represent the Jewish Safer Space without even consulting the Jewish Safer Space first.

When the Jewish Safer Space then secured a speaker themselves, they were told by the Volt Europa Board that the panel was already complete and the speaker organised by the Jewish Safer Space would not be able to join. This decision was only reversed after strong insistence by the Jewish Safer Space and pressure by national and regional boards on the Volt Europa Board. This course of action made the contact persons from the Jewish Safer Space feel guilt-tripped for insisting on their own speaker, because the Board claimed that inviting at least this one speaker selected by the Jewish Safer Space (which they were asked to do by the Board on October 21) meant that other speakers might need to be uninvited.

Moreover, only on the Wednesday before the panel discussion which took place on Sunday did the Jewish Safer Space learn that a 10-page briefing existed that had been used to contact other potential speakers by the Volt Europa Board. At the same time, not only had the proposed speakers by the Jewish Safer Space not been contacted at all (not even the potential Palestinian speaker), the Jewish Safer Space was apparently also expected to recruit speakers without access to the briefing by the Board.

In short, this process was set up for the Jewish Safer Space to fail – and the fact that one speaker proposed by the Jewish Safer Space was still placed on the panel after all was close to a miracle. After this latest experience, none of the members of the Jewish Safer Space trusts the Volt Europa Board to create a task force that will not sideline or silence Jewish voices within Volt yet again.

### **Outlook on the future regarding discrimination within Volt**

As Volt is completely ignoring how its own Jewish members (and the majority of Jewish organisations worldwide) would like to define the form of discrimination that only affects them (as well as the people perceived to be Jewish) – namely antisemitism –, who is next?

Antisemitism – like other forms of hatred – kills. Therefore, definitions matter. So, ignoring the deadly reality of one minority today is only an indicator of the state of democracy (within this party) as a whole: a democracy which does not protect minorities is not a democracy, but a dictatorship of the majority.

Volt claims to care about the human rights of everyone. So, if we do not speak out now that one group is affected, who will speak out when the next one will be?

For this reason, we speak out one final time within this party, as we have done countless times over the years. However, as the result of the IHRA/JDA vote has now officially made clear, there is not much space left anymore for Volt's own Jewish Safer Space. So, with a very heavy heart, we have no choice but to leave this movement and party which has left all of us.

For those asking us to stay, not to be silenced completely, especially in sight of the upcoming Volt Europa Board elections: We hear you, but it is not on us to fight this deficit anymore; as we have explained above, we no longer have the trust in this party to do so. The result of the IHRA/JDA vote is the final straw after this party has been largely ignoring antisemitic incidents for years. If by June 2026 there will be a more positive outlook on how this party treats its own minorities, some of us may come back.

However, it has always been on all of us to do something about discrimination, even if one was seemingly not personally affected at first. So, now, it is on you – the ones who decide to stay – to bring this positive change to the party. So far, the silence of the majority within this party has been extremely loud.

"For evil to flourish, it only requires good men to do nothing." – Simon Wiesenthal\*