

Dear ALDE Friends

Liberalism is being threatened, not just outside of Europe, but also in many European countries. People question liberal democracy and lose trust in politicians, political parties, and parliaments. As we are one year away from crucial elections, it is time for us liberals to turn the tide. We must fight populism and regain faith in a brighter future. We need to reach the hearts and minds of citizens. We must convince them that individual freedoms, political participation, and the rule of law are valuable and worth fighting for. Liberalism leads to higher levels of well-being and welfare. That should be our message! We must communicate this in a confident, clear, and united way. For that, we need strong liberal parties in Europe and beyond, while we should also have a well-functioning and well-organised ALDE. I want to assume this challenge and wholeheartedly want to support this project. That is why my party and its President Egbert Lachaert nominated me as the Open Vld candidate for ALDE Treasurer.

Since the age of seventeen, I have been a member of Open Vld (Flemish Liberal Party) and I was President of Open Vld Vrouwen (Women's subsection of Open Vld). For years, I have been active on the local level as a city councillor and alderman, while on the national level, I was Secretary of State for Budget and Consumer Protection in the Belgian Government until November 2022. Internationally, I participated in many ALDE events and congresses, and I was an active member of The Alliance of Her.

Before joining the Belgian Government, I worked for a consulting firm in Oxford mainly on EU agricultural and trade-related projects and for FoodDrinkEurope. More recently, I worked for the European Commission (in DG Trade, DG ENER, and DG MARE), mostly on the policy areas regarding trade and competitiveness, working closely with the European Parliament and the Council.

As the Secretary of State, I attached great importance to transparency, guaranteeing better services for citizens, a continuous dialogue with all stakeholders, and the involvement of everyone who can contribute to the policy-making process.

As a treasurer of ALDE, I want to continue these efforts. In my view:

1. The **ALDE-budget is ours** to promote liberalism over the European continent. We, the members, often have difficulties raising the necessary funds. Therefore, our contributions to the ALDE-party should have a good return on investment to ourselves and our liberal sister parties and organisations.
2. This means a **bigger involvement of and transparency to us**, the members. Transparency is not an option, nor a choice. Transparency means the involvement of the members regularly in a structured way.

3. Engaging external consultancies are possible if no **internal expertise** can be found within the member parties. We are all plotting out our electoral and political strategies on a day-to-day basis. So why not use our own expertise and increase cooperation?
4. **The budget is the basis of our strategies, long and short-term.** Clear on the short term and, where necessary, flexible on the longer term. ALDE is there in a supportive role towards our (new) member parties and (new) political representatives in whatever European political institution and organisation.
5. We should be **more protective of our budget** towards administrations that in se don't want us to do politics with it. If they like it or not, democracy is based on politicians doing politics. Not on administrations interpreting regulations their way.
6. **The treasurer is a full member of the ALDE bureau** and is not only responsible for the management of the budget and human resources. Challenges to the budget can hinder our policies. The role of the treasurer is a proactive one, to see opportunities and warn for restrictions if needed.
7. **Transparently growing the budget**, lessening the burden of it towards our members, benchmarking it to our competitors, and comparing it with the good practices of our members, is a must and daily effort. The budget is not just paperwork, it is an active policy.
8. **Earmarking some parts of the budget** towards specific policies where we (can) make a difference will be of help to our member parties. With the ALDE-budget we should consider making an EU-wide campaign regularly where we support our members and benefit from each other's efforts.
9. **Reinforcing each other with ALDE-budget.** Research should be done to organise an **internal Erasmus-program** where interested member parties could exchange promising people as traineeships and enhance each other's work.
10. **Happy people** make good volunteers and employees. To make and keep people involved, it asks a lot of energy and presence on the floor at the base. Human resources and administration are a big part of the job and demand active presence, an active policy and taking (personal and political) responsibility.

I sincerely hope I can count on your vote during the elections at the upcoming congress. I am and will be extremely dedicated to strengthening European democracy and our liberal values, and hope that you will support me to do this from within the beating heart of our ALDE party.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions. I am happy to meet in person or digitally to discuss my candidacy or exchange views on how to further strengthen our party, improve its functioning and manage the budget.

Yours,

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