



Welcome to the tenth edition of the Pirate Times newsletter.

It was fairly quiet in the Pirate world this month so we wrote a few articles in the "Tips & Tricks" section. The Creative Commons, leafleting, video and we introduced you to the English speaking salon in Mumble. We also talked about the need for Pirates to be barrier free on the web.

But the quiet was punctuated by more attention gaining events such as Kim Dotcom praising the Pirate movement and especially PP.CAT for looking after the interests of Megaupload victims and the PPIS's Birgitta Jónsdóttir announcing she is planning a trip to the USA to the dismay of her Government and the concern and admiration of Pirates and activists around the world.

To round things off we had a close call with privacy in Slovina and a riviting interview with PPUK's Preisident Loz Kay shortly after the Bristish Prime Minister anounced a referendum on whether the UK should stay in the EU.

We hope you enjoy these news and we're always happy for feedback, ideas or tips at contact@piratetimes.net

The Pirates Times Team

Btw: You can also read the Pirate Times online at our [blog](#) or for offline reading just download the PDF version: %PDF_LINK%

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Creative Commons â€“ Sharing is Caring



The Pirate Times takes care to ensure that all media that is sourced from outside our own group have a (CC) **Creative Commons** license. In the same spirit all our work is published under the licenses - attribution and share alike.

Unfortunately and embarrassingly many Pirates and even Pirate Parties post content to the web or in print with "all rights reserved". This is especially embarrassing when the subjects of the media in question are Pirate Party related. It also opens us up to the charge of hypocrisy, to some extent, when it is being done by a Pirate Party or Pirate affiliated organisation. It also opens us up to attacks by trolls who want to damage the party. The problem mainly arises because the default is "all rights reserved" be it on your own blog, web page or social media. Assigning a CC license means you are changing this to "some rights reserved" and you get to control which rights are kept.

Now other Pirates and non Pirates (remember "sharing is caring?") can use your content without having to contact you to get your explicit permission. Uploading your content to CC friendly sites like [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/) and [wikimedia](https://www.wikimedia.org/) means Pirates and others can search for and use your content. When you upload images or videos to Facebook or any other social media site then adding a CC license in the description helps the sharing to spread. On you blog or web site you can ensure that there is a easily seen notice that informs your viewers that your content is CC licensed. We use:

CC-BY 2013 Pirate Times, please link back to us if using our content.

If you are using CC content from someone else, and we hope you are, then do the right thing and attribute it to them, with a link if possible. If they ask to "share alike" then also use the license they used.

If you are not familiar with the CC codes here is a short overview but do go to the [Creative Commons](https://creativecommons.org/) site for a full explanation in English and most major languages.

BY - Attribution: you must give credit to the creator

SA ? Share Alike: you must pass the license conditions to the next user.

NC ? Non Commercial: the work may not be used for commercial purposes

ND ? No Derivatives: the work may not be changed in any way ? This is not helpful for other Pirates, who might want to simply change or translate a text for example and should only be used when absolutely necessary.

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Written by Andrew Reitemeyer published at February 10, 2013

How To: Distribute Leaflets in Letterboxes



One good and cost efficient way to get the Pirate message out, is through distributing leaflets to letterboxes (apart from in the USA, where anything placed in a mail box **must be stamped**). This article assumes you have access to leaflets ? we will discuss how to make your own in another article which will be linked here when it has been published.

If your party has a broad spectrum of policies and you have access to several different leaflets then you can use clues from the house and surrounding area to choose an appropriate subject to increase the impact of your leaflet. Some examples of targeting your leaflets would be:

- If you saw play equipment it would mean you leave a leaflet that focuses on children and education
- A neat and well kept garden might mean retired people live there and a leaflet on health policy or pensions might be more appropriate

☐ Solar panels on the roof means they might be more interested in energy policy

Should you meet a resident during your walk do not hesitate to explain that you are from the Pirate Party and have some copies of your platform and manifesto with you to give to people that show an interest. Small gifts, such as some Pirate Party logo pens or stickers, are also useful when you meet someone. Another tip is to wear a badge identifying you as belonging to the Pirate Party whilst walking around. Should anyone become aggressive towards you ? smile and walk away.

Always make sure that your leaflet has contact information for you local chapter. A stamp with a URL pointing to the local web page or contact details can help you win new voters but also new members. If there is a "beware of the dog" sign and the letterbox is not at the gate you can assume the dog is not dangerous. Owners of dangerous dogs have their letterboxes at the gate or they would not receive their regular mail.

If you see a notice asking for 'no leaflets or advertising' then please respect it. Annoying people does not encourage them to vote Pirate. Avoid leafleting in rain unless you can protect your leaflets from becoming soaked with water - soggy leaflets are seldom read. A campaign bag ? see photo ? is very useful in this regard. The [German Pirate Shop](#) (German language) will soon be able to deliver outside Germany and in standard PP colours. Another option is using the [Swedish shop](#) which can also ship abroad. Do you know any more pirate shops that ship products internationally? Let us know in the comments section.

Use [google maps](#) to plan and record which streets have been leafleted. This helps avoid covering the same houses if you are working as a team and over several days. If you cannot cover a whole area try to leaflet the area for specific polling stations. This will allow you to see how effective your work has been after the election by comparing them to the results of stations

whose areas were not leafleted (my local chapter did this in the recent elections in Lower Saxony in January 2013 and found a 20-30% increase in votes cast for the Pirate Party). Suggest this to other local chapters in your area and use the combined analysis to help plan your next campaign. Make sure to include this part in your post-campaign analysis.

Featured image: [Laura Dornheim](#) delivering campaign literature in Lower Saxony 01 2013
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Written by Andrew Reitemeyer published at February 8, 2013

The Pirate Movement on Facebook and Twitter “ January 2013



During the months of December and January the Pirate movement grew with 6.509 followers on Facebook and 6.815 followers on twitter. This brings the total amount of people following a pirate party on Facebook or twitter to 675.176 people.

This post will deal with a gap of two months since I was too busy to update during Christmas time. The [last post](#) was about the change in November so this will count the change in December + January

Facebook

On Facebook we can see a continued drop for Germany which was explained last time. The

'Romania (ACTA)' group is also dropping significantly, most likely because people feel the pirate party messages there are not why they signed up. Two parties in South America have seen a massive growth, Brazil with +1225 followers and Colombia with a massive +636 followers (+34%) which means they have probably increased their activity there. Africa is also getting more attention with +717 followers in Tunisia and +978 followers in Morocco. Two of our newest pirate parties are quickly increasing their following with +602 in Iceland and +510 in Norway. Unfortunately we have also lost two accounts amassing over 3000 followers. Israel 1 was taken down after claims from Israel 2 about being "the real party" and Morocco 1 deleted their account due to lack of motivation.

Twitter

Despite a heavy loss in Facebook we see a continued strong growth in following for Germany (+826). Sweden also saw a massive growth of fans (+619) most likely after getting the giant boost on Facebook a few months back. United States seems to have gotten very active on twitter and increases with 391 followers (+36%). Mexico lost 4 followers and Morocco 1 lost 1582 followers when they deleted their account due to lack of motivation.

FAQ

*Why only Facebook and Twitter? Why not Google+, vk.com or others? - Mostly because it's hard to know what other social networks to include. Only doing Facebook and Twitter takes a lot of time, even though there are scripts to update followers. The same reasoning goes for federated services such as status.net as well since it's hard to gather useful statistics for them.

*Can I have access to the .csv file you used for these stats? - Right now only if you have a very good reason and a specific purpose for them. I am working on updating contact information for different Pirate Parties. The plan is to make everything accessible in a good format with continuous updates. Giving out the information freely at this stage would only result in several versions of the document being in circulation where some are badly updated and faulty.

*Why is country X not included? - Probably because I didn't know about it or considered their activity as dead. Send me a message or comment on this post and it will be included for next month

*Why is there "Countryname 1" and "Countryname 2" for some countries? - Because of internal struggles in that country with two pirate parties both claiming to be the official one. I would rather not waste my time on determining which is legitimate and which not and therefore I add both statistics until it is cleared up.

*Isn't the follower/population very biased? - As all statistics numbers are biased in some way. Just measuring number of followers are biased to bigger countries. The follower/population obviously gives the initial country (Sweden) a bonus as well as countries sharing the same language. This is still an important alternative measurement since it shows relative impact of the social media account.

*Why did you not include local party X who is bigger than some countries here? - This is supposed to measure international impact. The reason Catalonia and Galicia are measured separately is that they are quasi-autonomous regions, independent from Spain.

Featured image: Public Domain, CC0

Written by Josef Ohlsson Collentine published at February 6, 2013

Why Pirates Should Care About Accessibility on the Web



Accessibility of Public Sector Websites

Government information and services are increasingly provided online. Basically a good thing, but if these services are not provided in an accessible way, some groups of people may have a problem because they can't take part (any more) in these processes.

If a parliamentary debate has a video stream, but it's in [Silverlight](#), a lot of people can not see it. They should use open software. And if there is no textual equivalent (live or later on) people with hearing difficulties are cannot access this information.

If a deaf person wants to fill in a form for social security regulations, and the only alternative to an inaccessible online form is to call the agency, he or she gets stuck.

So information should not only be basically available (provided by the government) to the public, but also accessible to groups of people with disabilities. You may think that these numbers aren't that big, but in Europe we are talking about an estimated number of citizens with functional limitations or disabilities of 15% of the EU working age population, or 80 million people. And this will probably increase significantly as the Union's population ages. The estimated percentage of websites that are accessible is less than 10%. [1].

Legislation: proposal from the European Commission for harmonization

In the Netherlands, like many other countries, there is a set of rules for government websites. But it's a big problem that only a small part of these websites are actually accessible. There is

no real sanction, and most people working on these sites are not aware of the problem in the first place, or think it's not that important. Also, it often doesn't apply to semi-public services like schools and health care institutions, where it may be even more important to be accessible for everyone.

In December 2012 the European Commission came with a proposal to harmonise the legislation for web-accessibility in the EU member states. (The Dutch ministry of internal affairs stated in reaction to this that they 'don't need' EU-wide legislation, because there is already a Dutch set of rules. Which obviously has had too little effect so far.) [2]

Stated in the proposal harmonisation will lead to better market conditions, more jobs, cheaper web-accessibility and more accessible websites: a triple win for governments, businesses and citizens. The EC not only requires governmental websites (as a sector) to be accessible, but focuses on a list of use cases and tasks that are most important, like tax declarations, employment services, social security applications, police declarations, and registering at public libraries, universities and health services. From there the requirements can be extended to other websites.

Worldwide standards and resources: everything is available

The international standard for web-accessibility is issued by the W3C, called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines ([WCAG 2.0](#)). The difference on national level is which level of WCAG is required, for which websites, how it is evaluated and monitored and if and how it is sanctioned when there is no compliance.

I think it's a good thing that the EC pays attention to web-accessibility. But at this moment, for the citizens, what does it matter if a site conforms to the American, British, Dutch or EU official standards? We should include as many people as possible, and with the help of the WCAG guidelines and online shared knowledge on web-accessibility best practises, every web-developer and -manager can contribute to this right now.

For the Pirate Party I think it's important to stress that every citizen should be able to take part in democracy and make informed decisions. We should at first look at the websites which are most important for this purpose, like (local) government sites, websites of the educational system, scientific and journalistic online resources. And Pirates can stimulate other organizations to do this as well, to have a better informed society all together.

Sources:

[1] Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the accessibility of public sector bodies' websites

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/dae/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=9125

[2] Reaction of the Dutch ministry of Internal Affairs to the EC proposal (in Dutch)

<http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2013/01/11/aanbiedingsbrief-met-informatie-over-nieuwe-commissievoorstellen.html>

See also:

[3] CRPD 2012 ICT Accessibility Progress Report (worldwide)

http://g3ict.org/resource_center/CRPD_2012_ICT_Accessibility_Progress_Report

[4] UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>

Featured image: [mherzber](#) CC BY-SA

Written by Janita Top published at February 5, 2013

Corruption scandal in Spanish Government



A huge corruption scandal has erupted in the Spanish Government. It has important implications since it involves the **Partido Popular** (People's Party, the leading political party in Spain), several Ministers and even the current Prime Minister, **Mr. Mariano Rajoy**.

It all began in 2007, when a police investigation ordered by Judge **Baltasar Garzón** ended up with five suspects detained in 2009. They were accused of bribery, money laundering and tax evasion, all of it affecting members of the People's Party or public contracts that were -allegedly- awarded without following the proper legal procedures. The name of this operation was "**Gürtel**", and its judicial path is still on going.

Some days ago, the Spanish newspaper "El Mundo" published in an article that Mr. Luis Bárcenas (who was treasurer of the People's Party for 20 years) had been regularly giving **envelopes with money** to prominent members of the party. These amounts of money, according to "El Mundo", were never declared and could have originated in illegal commissions paid in exchange for public contracts. At the same time, "El Mundo" reported that Mr. Bárcenas had a secret Swiss bank account with 22 million euros (which had not been declared to Spanish fiscal authorities either). All this money might be linked -always according to "El Mundo"- to payments in the "Gürtel" case.

A hidden accountancy in the Government?

If this information was already shocking, the scandal has just reached another level. A different Spanish newspaper, "El País", has recently published what could be **the "occult books"** in the Bárcenas scandal. Apparently, the journal has acquired a copy of the illegal accountancy records of the People's Party, all handwritten by Mr. Bárcenas. If this was true, then the information provided by "El Mundo" would have gained more credibility.

But there's something even more important. In the copy of books published by "El País", some

important names appear. They include critical members of the Spanish Government, such as [Dolores de Cospedal](#) -Secretary-General of the People's Party-, [Rodrigo Rato](#) -who was Minister of Economy and Managing Director of the IMF-, [Jaime Mayor Oreja](#) -who was Minister of Interior-, [Francisco Álvarez Cascos](#) -who was Vicepresident of the Government-, [Javier Arenas](#) -former Minister of Labour- and [Ángel Acebes](#) -who was Minister of Justice.

However, the most important name in the list is this: Mr. Mariano Rajoy Brey, nothing less than the current Prime Minister of Spain.

Should all of this be true, it could very well mean a direct hit to the Spanish Government, including the need for new general elections. People are becoming increasingly upset; as a petition, [an initiative in Change.org](#), has managed to get over 350.000 signatures asking for the resignation of the Government... and it has been managed in less than 24 hours.

The People's Party quickly denied all accusations -even if Mr. Rajoy himself has made no official statement- and has said that the documents are false. However, [some individuals included in the list have already admitted it to be true](#), and have confirmed the validity of the amounts shown, at least in what concerns them. The first one to declare so was Mr. Pío García Escudero, the President of the Spanish Senate.

Some important considerations on this case:

- "El Mundo" and "El País" are rivals with totally opposite ideologies. The former is right-wing and the latter is more on the left-wing of the political spectrum. Therefore, it's significant that both newspapers are basically saying the same.
- The People's Party has been cutting social welfare expenses in Spain, to the point that unemployment subsidies have been reduced, medical centers have been closed, public services have been diminished, and a new labour legislation has been created (one that allows for quick and cheap layoffs). If these accusations were true, citizens would not accept the new social cuts that the Government was planning.
- Some of the "donors" in this scandal are also indicted in the "Gürtel" affair.
- Several months ago, the People's Party created a "tax amnesty" for Spaniards who hadn't declared in their taxes important amounts of money. Mr. Bárcenas has just declared that he used this amnesty on 11 million euros. Some journalists suggest that the amnesty was created

precisely to benefit people like him.

- Another corruption scandal (the "**Nóos Case**", involving the Spanish King's son-in-law, Mr. Iñaki Urdangarín) has links to one of the members in the "Gürtel/Bárcenas" affair. For example, the name of **Mr. Jaime Matas** -President of the Balearic Islands- has appeared in both cases.
 - Judge Baltasar Garzón, known for his fight against corruption and current lawyer of Mr. Julian Assange, was accused by the People's Party of illegal wiretrapping during the "Gürtel" case. He was declared guilty and was expelled from the Spanish judiciary.
 - The People's Party is currently drafting a so-called "transparency law" (since Spain lacks one). In theory, this law would prevent corruption. However, the law has been criticized because it appears to be focused on the opposite: opacity. As an example, political parties won't have to obey this law, nor will for example the Royal Family, and the Government will have many loopholes to prevent any giving of information (the most significant is what's called "administrative silence", meaning that any public administration can answer any request of information... by not answering it). The Bárcenas case may have an impact on this law.
- All this scandal makes clear that the Spanish legal system needs a wide reform. And as the Pirate movement calls for more transparency and an open Government, this could become an important opportunity for the Spanish Pirates.

Featured image: by **Corelinn** CC BY-NC-SA

Written by Fabián Plaza Miranda published at February 2, 2013

Iceland's Pirate Party Leader Plans Risky Trip to USA



Into the Lion's Den

Pirate Party Iceland's [Birgitta Jónsdóttir](#) will travel to the USA early in April 2013, at great risk to her own liberty, to bring attention to the fact that whistle blower Bradley Manning has been held for over 1000 days without charge. The Icelandic government and her own lawyers have strongly advised her not to go but she says in her [Icelandic blog](#)

?I have decided that it is impossible to live my life in such a way that, as a member of parliament and of the electorate, I have to have such restrictions imposed on me so that I cannot enjoy the freedom to travel to a country that claims to be the land of the free? [Translated]

She will travel to the US in early April. This is shortly after the fact that the US justice department demanded that Twitter hand over all her tweets with out informing her or the public. Twitter bravely fought this action in the courts also she was [denied access to a list](#) of companies namely that the same demand for her data from the authorities. This is after FBI arrived unannounced in Reykjavik to ?investigate? Wikileaks in the country. There can be little doubt they were targeting Brigitta as she was very instrumental in bringing out the famous video ? [Collateral Murder](#)? which shows the gunning down of Iraqi civilians by US forces in Baghdad in 2007. The Secretary of State [Ögmundur Jónasson](#) found out about the spies and [bundled them back to the States](#) followed by a diplomatic protest. One wishes more politicians in Western nations would have the moral fibre and courage shown by Ögmundur.

PPIS is one of the movement's youngest parties having been [founded on 24 November 2012](#) and Birgitta was appointed its first "leader" by consensus. So Pirates around the world will be supporting her in her brave act but with concern at the possible actions the US authorities might take.

Featured Image: by <http://www.flickr.com/photos/savebradley/> savebradley

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Written by Andrew Reitemeyer published at February 2, 2013

Pirate Parties Help Victims of Megaupload Seizure



Love him or hate him, Kim Dotcom has been in the headlines ever since New Zealand police **raided his mansion** at the behest of the FBI on 20 January 2012. The FBI also seized the servers belonging to his company **Megaupload** and all the files held on them. A very controversial action which was **described by one of his lawyers** as "whatever happened to the presumption of innocence, and why is it being denied in this case". Since then Kim Dotcom has been fighting back; embarrassing both the New Zealand and US governments and, despite being on bail, launching a **new file sharing site Mega** ? this time encrypted.

But it was not only Dotcom and his business associates who were affected by the seizure. Millions of users who had innocently stored files which did not infringe copyright or other forms of intellectual property on the Megaupload servers lost all access to their data. Now, over a year later, they have had no opportunity to get it back nor have seen any chance of compensation. It is somewhat akin to watching the police seize a bank which had customers that were allegedly engaged in money laundering (and which major bank hasn't?) and telling all the other customers they had, lost all access to their deposits ?forever. And then, to make matters worse, insinuating

that because they were using that bank they were probably laundering money as well.

Pirates are not the sort of people that stand off to the side. The [Pirate Party of Catalonia](#) has taken matters in hand, with the support from several national Pirate Parties and [Pirate Parties International](#), they have started registering customers of Megaupload who have suffered a loss at the hands of the authorities. The aim is to start class action lawsuits against the US in as many countries as possible. It may not lead to data restoration or compensation being paid but at least the resulting publicity might make them think twice about doing it again.

If you or someone you know has been affected by the closure of Megaupload then the [Pirata.CAT registration site](#) might well be of interest.

Featured image: by [home of chaos](#) CC BY

Correction: the date of the raid was given as 20 January 2013 it has now been corrected to 20 January 2012 - thanks to David Metcalf for bringing the mistake to my attention. (AR)

Written by Andrew Reitemeyer published at February 1, 2013

Using Video in the Pirate Cause



It is becoming increasingly clear that one of the most effective ways to get the Pirate message across is by video. [Pirat.cat Z](#) was the most watched video of any in the recent elections in Catalonia. This was produced by talented Pirates for a very little outlay. Another notable example of Pirate produced video is the docu-series [?#exile6e?](#) which is available on the

[Piratpartiet](#) (Swedish Pirate Party) channel under a CC BY license.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-j7ac1xPKk>

Pirate Times writer [Anton Nordenfur](#) reported on the [series](#) in October 2012 when it was basically starting out. It is made by MEP [Amelia Andersdottir's](#) team and is about how they work for information policy and other Pirate principles in Brussels on a day by day basis. It is well done, entertaining and well worth following. Additionally it did not cost a fortune to make.

The point is that you do not need a lot of money or experience to produce videos that can be effective means to inform people of the Pirate program in your region or to win new members. Mobile phone and video cameras that can take HD quality video can be bought cheaply. A list of open-source and freeware video editing software can be found on [wikipedia](#). The only other thing you need is time, enthusiasm and [knowledge](#). Use your search engine of choice to find other guides in English or your own language.

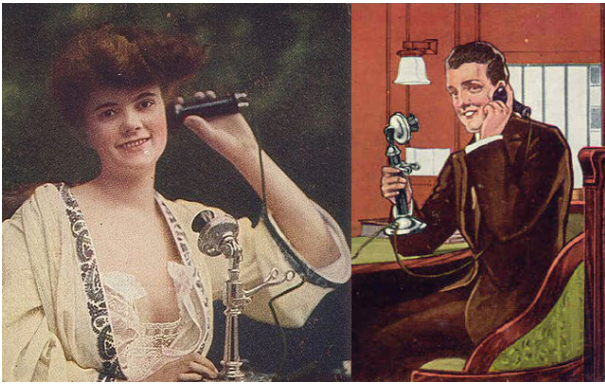
You can use social media like youtube, google+, facebook and twitter, etc, as well as your own web sites and blogs to get your work out to the public. Be sure to publish with a [creative commons license](#) so that others can spread your work and the message it contains.

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Written by Andrew Reitemeyer published at January 30, 2013

Mumble â€œ The English Speaking Salon



If there is one thing that facilitates communication between international Pirates it is the English language. Love it or hate it and despite the fact that the majority Pirate languages are German and Swedish, most collaborative activities are conducted in English. As the growing world-wide Pirate Movement expands into new countries and involves more people from diverse cultures we need as many means of communication as possible. The Pirate Times is, of course one such medium, as are the international conferences and workshops organised by our parent organisation Pirate Parties International.

However most of us do not have the time, funds or opportunity to jet across the world. Mumble is our solution to this problem. Mumble is an open source, low-latency, high quality voice chat software primarily intended for use while gaming. The Pirate has adopted it for its own purposes and it is being used to connect pirates on a continuous basis around the planet.

Mumble uses a system of rooms and most are dedicated to uses for specific groups with specific purposes but now PPI has seen a need for Pirates just to be able to hang out together, chat, get to know each other and share ideas and experiences. Thus, at the request of PPBE, it has created the 'English speaking salon', located in the international section of the server run by the North Rhine Westphalia branch of the German Pirate Party.

If you are familiar with Mumble and have the server details then you can go there and chat. It has just been started so be patient and we are sure that it will be humming soon. If there are too many people there already, temporary extra rooms can be added by registered users. If you wish you can give some background information about yourself in the comment box and a picture if you so desire.

If you do not have Mumble yet then read on.

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Downloading and Installing Mumble

The Mumble client can be downloaded from the [source forge page](#).

Once you have done that follow these instructions to connect to the NRW server.

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- Open the Mumble client
- In the top left corner click on ?Server? then ?Connect ? a new window opens
- Under ?Servername? click on the arrow opening ?Public Internet? then ?Europe? then ?Germany?
- Find ?Piratenpartie NRW? and click on it ? a button ?Connect? at the bottom will become active. Click on this button.
- A small input window will open labeled ?Enter Username? - here you can enter your name or a nickname for your mumble session.
- When the connection is complete you will see a list of rooms Find "International" and double click on "English speaking salon"

Personalize Mumble

To personalize your Mumble presence click on the ?C? button or the toolbar item ?Self? You can add a small bio of your self with an avatar and links.

Configuring Mumble

To make sure that your chat is most comfortable for you and your friends it is best to use the ?push to talk? feature:

Click the ?Configure? button in the tool bar and select ?Settings?. It should open at ?Audio Input?.

In the section ?Transmission? and item ?Transmit? select ?Push-to- Talk? from the drop-down list you will find under ?Function?.

On the same line click under ?Shortcut? and key in the key combination you want to use when you wish the microphone to be live. CTR-Shift is a good choice as it is almost never used when typing normally.

Registration

The next thing you should do is register. This means you can keep a permanent nickname that no one else can use. It also means other users can trust you are who you say you are and you get certain privileges like being able to create temporary rooms. This is found under the tool bar item ?Self?.

You are now ready to Mumble with English speaking Pirates from around the world. See you there.

Featured image: Public Domain

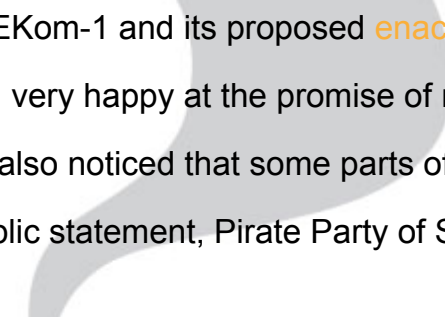
Written by Andrew Reitemeyer published at January 28, 2013

Slovenia enacted net neutrality, but almost made a step toward Orwellian police state



These days Slovenia is under the pressure of constant protests against corrupt politicians and a government crisis which pushed everything else to the edge of media attention. Even the enactment of the Electronic Communication Act (ZEKom-1) which almost gave authorities a right to unconstitutionally snoop on Slovenian citizens.

It all began at the beginning of June when the European Commission (EC) decided to ask the European Court of Justice to fine Slovenia because it did not implement **revised EU telecom rules** . The Slovenian minister in charge promised to **prepare new law** as soon as possible.



The media reported on the new ZEKom-1 and its proposed **enactment of net neutrality**, but members of Pirate Party, although very happy at the promise of net neutrality which is an important part of party's program, also noticed that some parts of the proposed act could enable Deep Packet Inspection. In it's public statement, Pirate Party of Slovenia also stressed its **disapproval of data retention**.

The real drama started in the beginning of autumn when the Information Commissioner (IC) warned that ZEKom-1, in article 166, paragraph 7 enables authorities to get information about a particular subscriber of electronic communication connection without court order. In her **appeal**, the IC stressed that this paragraph is in direct violation of article 37 of Slovenian Constitution which guarantees the **privacy of correspondence** and other means of communication . She also wrote that the paragraph was added AFTER her office checked the proposal of the law for possible irregularities.

The whole affair escalated to the point when IC and the minister in charge quarreled over Twitter about the questionable [paragraph](#) . Slovenian media reported that the paragraph was subsequently added at the request of the [Slovenian National Intelligence Agency](#).

Pirate Party of Slovenia issued a statement in which it expressed its support of the IC's statement and demanded the particular paragraph to be removed from the act. Pirate Party also stressed that it is unacceptable that the paragraph was [added in secret](#), without public debate.

The biggest party of the government coalition SDS, under the pressure of civil society, decided to [remove the paragraph](#) from the act. But the whole affair was not over yet. Some ISPs demanded that [net neutrality to be removed from the act](#). Luckily, they didn't succeed and on 20 December 2012 the representatives in parliament passed the vote in [favor of the act](#) and [net neutrality](#).

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Written by Matic Urbanija published at January 26, 2013

UK/EU Debate – PPUK: “We will not benefit from antagonising neighbours”



In the debate on the future of UK and EU, PPUK Leader Loz Kaye outlined a pirates' vision of a citizens' Europe in an interview with PirateTimes. In his opinion, Cameron's initiative sounded threatening to some EU members. The vision of the PPUK for Europe could push the reforms into a completely other direction than Cameron would probably wish. However, PPUK has withdrawn from PPEU founding process, Kaye said in the interview.

Loz Kaye has been Leader of Pirate Party UK since September 2010. He has stood for election several times, and got 5% in the Bradford Ward area of Manchester, the best local result for PPUK and beating government coalition party the Liberal Democrats. He appears widely talking about digital rights, civil liberties and whistle blowing, on the BBC, Russia Today and CNN amongst other media. He talked with us about the current debate on relations between UK and EU.

PirateTimes: First, a bit about history. The British have always had difficulties to feeling part of a greater European community, although they were founding members in 1992 and considered as one key state to success of the EU. They are not part of the Euro zone, they are not part of the Financial Stabilisation Alliance, and they are not part of Schengen Contract Zone. Why do the British seem to resist European integration?

Loz Kaye: Britain has always been independent minded, it's partly our island geography and partly our particular cultural history. I think our healthy scepticism of power is a good thing, and something I recognise in the Pirate movement. Whether it's the fact that we drive in miles on the left, or drink pints in the pub, we tend to do things differently. It was interesting that David Cameron thought it was important to give quite a lot of historical background to his speech. Our past can often trap us, but it certainly defines us.

Europe has been a difficult subject for British politicians for decades. It was a key part of the splits in the Conservative party under Prime Minister John Major, which ended up with the Tories in opposition for years. Other countries have had referendums on the Maastricht and Lisbon treaties and the Danes have won a democratic mandate for their opt outs. In the meantime our politicians have tried to keep a lid on things by resisting calls for a further vote. Putting off allowing UK citizens to have a voice in the fundamental change the EU has undergone has led to a deep and growing sense of alienation from the entire project. This is the case not just for politicians, but the country at large.

PirateTimes: What is the PPUK's position on the European Union?

Loz: I think it's fair to say many of our members have quite an internationalist outlook. Like any UK party (perhaps apart from UKIP!) there are a range of views, and of course we encourage debate. Even so, our crowd sourced manifesto which was overwhelmingly adopted by our members is clear. Our vision for the EU is based on our fundamental principles.

It's important that the EU increase its level of transparency and openness, and this should inform the EU's politics, organisation and administration. The union should be accountable to its members and citizens, the Council should be properly open to scrutiny by national parliaments, and there should be a fundamental rebalance to elected representatives.

Our manifesto also rules out adopting the Euro as our currency, and that no state should be required to join in the future as a requirement of membership.

PirateTimes: And what is the current public opinion in UK of the government's course?

Kaye: A lot of people think this has been overdue. The latest opinion polls have shown a majority 59% support a referendum, with only 21% opposed. It is much closer on voting intentions- 42% leave and 36% stay, but the number saying they will vote to leave has fallen from 51% in November.

My chief worry is because ?mainstream? politicians have found it easier tactically to ignore this lack of involvement, the territory has been given to the new populist right. The chief criticism of the EU we have seen has been joined to an explicitly xenophobic agenda. UKIP's latest attack on Bulgarians and Romanians has actually left me profoundly ashamed of my country. The real threat to the UK economy is if we shut ourselves away, as we are starting to do.

PirateTimes: Is PPUK taking part in the preparations for a PPEU and how much it is engaged in that project? Would a separation of UK away from the EU influence this engagement?

Loz: We value our links with our international friends in the movement. I'm also very happy that we were able to welcome people here to Manchester to host one of the PPEU conferences.

However, we have chosen to withdraw from the preparations for PPEU for now, mainly so we can focus our resources better. Speaking personally, it seems to share some of the problems of the EU itself, too much love of structure and not enough real political action.

We must never forget that the movement is not PPEU, PPI or any of the parties - it is our ideals. It is our desire for digital rights. It is our willingness to protect civil liberties. It is our wish to make a politics truly fit for the 21st century.

PirateTimes: What the PPUK recommends to the UK government? Does the party agree with a public vote, as Cameron suggested?

Loz: Given that self determination is one of the main principles we believe in, our manifesto commits to a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU being offered to voters in the UK. Any referendum should include the option for the UK to pull out and negotiate its own agreements with the EU as a whole or with individual member states.

I think we have nothing to fear from a referendum or the debate. But equally it would be naive not to recognise the road ahead will not be easy. It has been characterised as a forlorn hope to negotiate a new deal. But it should be abundantly clear to all 27 (soon to be 28) that business as usual is not an option. Our Prime Minister needs to realise we will not achieve what we want, if we go down the current path of antagonising our neighbours. We will only get what we want if it is of benefit to others too. It's how we frame what comes next that will determine the future of the EU and what part the UK plays in it.

PirateTimes: Reactions have been different. Politicians from very different EU countries have been concerned about the latest statements from London. Also, many pirates demonstrated disappointment, while a public survey on German news service "tagesschau" has shown a majority of their visitors for an opt-out of UK.

Loz: It's my hope that this can be an opportunity for all of us to make a Europe that is truly a citizens' Europe. It's unfortunate that Cameron managed to sound like he was making a threat rather than offering the chance to ask the deeper questions about what it is we all really want from the EU.

As far as the Pirate movement goes I think this is also a great opportunity for us to show we are broader than just being "the Internet party". We can show a real commitment to transparency

and accountable democracy. Despite the recent victory, surely ACTA, IPRED and data retention laws show how far the EU is from being truly accountable and the dangers if we do not reform. Surely we can - and should expect to do better, and think differently.

PirateTimes: If the referendum is successful, what from your point of view would need to change in UK or in the EU to enable a reunification?

Loz: It is up to us to put the case for an EU based on openness- with the UK in it. And others can play their part by asking their governments for an EU politics that is done with the people, not just cooked up by elites in closed rooms.

But I imagine if there were to be a British exit that would be the start of a major reshaping of the EU anyway. It is not as if concerns about the European community are just confined to the UK.

Many of our politicians have said the problem with Cameron calling for a referendum in 2017 is that it will cause uncertainty in the future. But the truth is that in the 21st century uncertainty is the one principle we can rely on. And if any party is equipped to deal with that, it is the Pirate Party.

PirateTimes: Loz, thank you for your time and good luck!

The interview has been conducted by Dominic Guhl for PirateTimes.

Featured Image Courtesy of Loz Kaye

Image Source: Courtesy of Loz Kaye

Written by Dominic Guhl published at January 25, 2013

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