

Should Piratpartiet join PPI ?

This document was compiled for a vote by the board of Piratpartiet. The following information has been collected through a mix of official documents, personal experience and interviews with persons involved. Apologies for writing in English, it was easier for me to process since the information was gathered in English. Will translate text if someone in the board needs me to. I'm happy to answer any further questions you might have around this.
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1 What is PPI

Pirate Parties International is a NGO organization providing resources and opportunities for international collaboration. PPI also provides support and encouragement to create pirate parties in new countries. The intention of PPI is to promote the pirate movement worldwide and prevent pirate parties from "re-inventing the wheel" over and over. Infrastructure and best-practices should be shared and copied internationally.

After talks, conferences and discussions starting in 2007 the PPI was officially founded at the Brussels conference April 16-18th 2010. The first general assembly of PPI took place last year in Friedrichshafen, Germany May 22-23rd. The next general assembly will take place in Prague April 14-15th

PPI currently consists of the following member nations: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom

PPI is managed by a board elected each year at the General Assembly. The board consists of two co-chairmen, treasurer, chief administrative officer and three board members. They meet twice a month in an open channel and meeting protocols can be viewed at http://wiki.pp-international.net/PPI_Board
The statutes of PPI can be found at: <http://int.piratenpartei.de/Statutes>

2 Joining: How Would Piratpartiet Benefit?

Piratpartiet is a bit special since it was the first Pirate Party. It will always be an important voice and influence for other Pirate Parties no matter what it does. Even though it was the first, it is important to not become too self-conscious. Piratpartiet still has a lot to learn from other pirate parties about structure, campaigns, political questions etc. Being part of an international coordinating NGO such as PPI would simplify and make exchange of practices and ideas more easy.

Being part of PPI would also give Piratpartiet voting rights (not only influence) which would directly help to direct the international movement in a desired way for Piratpartiet. As founder of the pirate movement it seems natural to have a say in the future direction of PPI through voting and not only influence from outside.

More practical benefits would be a more natural access to a network of like-minded people around the world which would open up for more exchanges of information and ideas internationally. International collaborations and campaigns (which regularly happen under the PPI flag) would also become more common resulting in more media attention. Another example of an advantage is the pending application of PPI joining WIPO which would give Piratpartiet access to additional conferences and information.

Joining PPI would make pirates in general, especially in Sweden, more aware of PPI and international pirates. An increased awareness would lead to more international pirates visiting Sweden and vice versa. More visits would lead to more diverse ideas resulting in a stronger political ideology.

3 Joining: How Would PPI Benefit?

Many of the points mentioned under "how would Piratpartiet benefit" would be valid here as well. Another very important part is the symbolic value of Piratpartiet joining PPI. This would symbolize a truly united pirate movement with all major pirate parties gathered.

Piratpartiet is the founder and most experienced pirate party. Providing some additional resources and knowledge to the pirate movement would help it grow stronger on an international level. Having a strong international movement helps greatly on a national level as well.

PPI works very similar to UN (with exactly one vote per member) but the subjective perception of power is still present. Having Sweden join would put some counterweight to some of the "dominance" PPDE appears to have.

4 A Brief History of PPI and Piratpartiet

Rick Falkvinge helped with spreading the idea of pirate parties around the world at the first international conference in Vienna 2007. Between 2007 and 2010 PPI was acting as a loose network with an appointed coordinator. In 2010 PPI was evolved a bit further (under more structured forms) and a core team was formed together with some statutes. This all took place at the conference in Brussels 2010 which Christian Engström had helped greatly in organizing by inviting european delegates as official guests and helping with some travel costs.

Unfortunately at the time of the conference the volcanic ashes from Iceland prevented Rick Falkvinge from attending. In his place Piratpartiet was represented by three young female pirates (through the three pirate rule) present in Brussels during that time. The main problem was that they did not have much prior knowledge about the conference and that they were not in a position to put a signature on behalf of Piratpartiet signing the statutes.

There were two main points of discussion that created social drama between the delegates from Piratpartiet and some other persons present. The first was worries about possible member fees (none so far in PPI). The second concern was a fear of PPI impeding on the independence of Piratpartiet. This was explained to not be the intention of PPI (or even possible in practice) but it did not seem to be understood fully by the Swedish delegates.

The conference ended with Piratpartiet not joining PPI but writing a supportive statement for the PPI concept. As far as I have heard from my sources nothing essential has happened between PPI and piratpartiet from the founding conference in 2010 and today. At the last PPI general assembly in Friedrichshafen two Swedes were present. I was there (unofficially, working on a project for increasing international communication) and Rick Falkvinge was there (more in the role of a political evangelist than an official representative of Piratpartiet).

The lack of interest for Piratpartiet engaging in further talks with PPI after the conference in Brussels is as far as I can tell not because of disagreement but due to other factors. One of them being the perceived need to look to others for inspiration and help has been lower than other countries since Piratpartiet started the movement. Another reason being the focus on national goals and not finding time for international topics or having persons dedicated to this.

5 Arguments Against Joining

PPI is a young organization with a lot left to decide. PPI not yet being two years old means a lot of statutes and administrative questions still left to decide. There will be many very long (but necessary) discussions with many strong-willed people from different cultures making it an arduous process.

PPI needs to acquire funds to run at operational level and become more effective. Exactly how this will be achieved is a future question but it is very unlikely other parties would suggest something that made Piratpartiet pay a very high fee. Donations or institutional funding are more likely.

Currently piratpartiet is able to quit membership with PPI at any given moment they want and there are no fees or responsibilities as a member. Thus the only risk would be someone from the board of PPI going "rogue" and discrediting the pirate movement in some way. Even without Piratpartiet as an official part of PPI this would still have a negative impact since PPI is becoming a symbol for all pirates worldwide.

6 Summary and Conclusion

PPI is an organization for promoting and encouraging international collaboration as well as providing some infrastructure and help for new countries willing to start a Pirate Party. The intention of PPI is to promote the pirate movement worldwide and prevent pirate parties from "re-inventing the wheel" over and over. Infrastructure and best-practices should be shared and copied internationally.

Today PPI is often used as a synonyme for the International pirate movement with or without Sweden. If Piratpartiet joined it would have a huge symbolical effect of a united pirate movement. It would also have many practical benefits with more international collaboration ensuing.

Joining PPI would give Piratpartiet an increased opportunity to influence, learn, teach, exchange and collaborate with other pirate parties. Additionally voting rights would be accrued resulting in direct influence in the future direction of PPI. Currently there are no fees or responsibilities attached to joining PPI. If, in the future, the situation changes there is no statutes or binding agreements preventing Piratpartiet from leaving PPI at any given time desired.

Based on the above I highly suggest that the board of Piratpartiet votes for a decision to apply for membership at the coming PPI general assembly April 14-15th in Prague.