

# Manifesto of the Pirate Party of Germany

English Version

Translated by: Emal Ghamsharik and Julia Reda

April 10th 2012

Piratenpartei Deutschland <http://www.piratenpartei.de>



Agreed on at the founding Meeting on September 10th 2006 in Berlin. The Chapter „Education“ was added at the federal party conference 2009 on 5.7.2009 in Hamburg. The chapters „Risking more democracy“ and „Free, democratically controlled technical infrastructure“ were added at 16.5.2010 in Bingen, the Section „Equality of Software“ was removed there. The Resolutions of the second federal party conference 2010 on 20./21. November 2010 in Chemnitz were added as well. The Chapters „For more diversity“ (originally separated in different single petitions), „Drug Policy“, „Addiction Policy“, the Subchapter „Open Contracts with Businesses“, the extension of the Chapter „Open Access to public Content“ and the Chapter „Abolishment of compulsory membership in chambers and associations (excepting associations for lawyers, notaries and physicians)“ were agreed upon on December 3th/4th 2011 at the federal party conference in Offenbach.

# Inhaltsverzeichnis

<b>1</b>	<b>Preamble</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Risking more democracy</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	More participation . . . . .	4
2.2	Identifying new ways . . . . .	5
2.3	Reinforcing separation of powers and freedom . . . . .	5
2.4	More democratic elections . . . . .	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Copyright and non-commercial reproduction</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1	No restrictions on copying . . . . .	6
3.2	Free copying and free use . . . . .	6
3.3	Promotion of culture . . . . .	6
3.4	Reconciling interests between originators and the public . . . . .	7
<b>4</b>	<b>Patenting</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1	Opening of markets and dismantling of private monopolies . . . . .	7
4.2	Patents in the information society . . . . .	8
<b>5</b>	<b>Free, democratically controlled technical infrastructure</b>	<b>8</b>
5.1	Open standards . . . . .	8
5.2	Free software . . . . .	9
<b>6</b>	<b>Participation in digital life</b>	<b>9</b>
6.1	Access to digital communication . . . . .	9
6.2	Possible uses of digital communication . . . . .	10
6.3	Learning how to use digital technology . . . . .	10
6.4	Digital society worldwide . . . . .	11
<b>7</b>	<b>Privacy and data protection</b>	<b>11</b>
7.1	Privacy . . . . .	12
7.2	Informational self-determination . . . . .	12
<b>8</b>	<b>Transparency of the state</b>	<b>13</b>
8.1	Open contracts with businesses . . . . .	14
<b>9</b>	<b>Open access to public content</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>15</b>
10.1	Education in a free democratic society . . . . .	15
10.2	The public education infrastructure . . . . .	15
10.3	Education as an individual process . . . . .	16
10.4	Democratization of educational facilities . . . . .	16
10.5	Early childhood education . . . . .	16

10.6	Media skills . . . . .	17
10.7	Learning goals instead of curricula . . . . .	17
<b>11</b>	<b>Right to secure livelihood and social participation</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Gender and family policy</b>	<b>18</b>
12.1	Free self-determination of gender and sexual identity/orientation . . . . .	18
12.2	World-wide acknowledgment and protection of self-determined gender or sexual identity and orientation . . . . .	18
12.3	Free self-determination of cohabitation . . . . .	19
12.4	Free self-determination and support for families . . . . .	19
<b>13</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>20</b>
13.1	Sustainability (freedom for later generations) . . . . .	20
13.2	Livable environment (protecting livelihoods) . . . . .	20
13.3	Use of resources . . . . .	20
13.4	Energy policy . . . . .	20
<b>14</b>	<b>For more diversity</b>	<b>20</b>
14.1	Migration enriches society . . . . .	20
14.1.1	The development of the European Union also leads to the completely free movement of its citizens. . . . .	21
14.1.2	Discrimination of labor migrants for several generations is inhumane	21
14.1.3	Europe needs economic migration . . . . .	21
14.1.4	Providing asylum from persecution and war . . . . .	22
14.2	Separation of state and religion . . . . .	22
14.3	United against racism . . . . .	22
<b>15</b>	<b>Drug policy</b>	<b>23</b>
15.1	New drug policy . . . . .	23
15.2	Regulation, help and guidance instead of punishment . . . . .	23
15.3	Protection of minors . . . . .	23
15.4	Research and medicine . . . . .	24
<b>16</b>	<b>Addiction policy</b>	<b>24</b>
16.0.1	Comprehensive, ideology-free education . . . . .	24
16.0.2	Responsibility and a culture of consumption . . . . .	24
16.0.3	Protection of minors and consumers . . . . .	24
16.0.4	Help for high-risk consumers . . . . .	25
16.0.5	Protection of non-consumers . . . . .	25
<b>17</b>	<b>Protection of whistleblowers</b>	<b>25</b>
17.1	Preamble . . . . .	25
17.2	Protection of whistleblowers . . . . .	25

<b>18 Law</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>19 Laws for freedom of information</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>20 Abolishment of compulsory membership in chambers and associations (excepting associations for lawyers, notaries and physicians)</b>	<b>27</b>

## **1 Preamble**

Despite all superficial promises to protect our rights, the digital revolution of all areas of our lives poses unparalleled threats to human dignity and freedom. The speed at which this is happening exceeds the speed at which public opinion, laws and individuals are able to react. At the same time, the opportunities of shaping this process through the democratic framework of individual states are vanishing.

The globalization of knowledge and human culture through digitalization and networking challenges all aspects of our traditional legal, economic and social systems. The wrong responses to this challenge make up just one of the reasons which promote the emergence of a complete totalitarian global police state. The fear of international terrorism makes security seem more important than freedom and mutes many of those who might otherwise defend freedom.

Informational self-determination, free access to knowledge and culture, and privacy protection are the pillars of the information society of the future. Only on this basis can a democratic global order emerge that guarantees social justice and self-determination.

First and foremost, the Pirate Party sees itself as part of a global political movement that wants to shape this order to the benefit of all.

The Pirate Party wants to concentrate on the topics mentioned in the party platform, since we see this as the only way to assert these important demands in the future. At the same time, we believe that these issues should have the support of citizens from all parts of the traditional political spectrum. Choosing sides in this spectrum would obstruct our shared struggle for privacy protection and free knowledge and culture.

## **2 Risking more democracy**

The Pirate Party considers democracy the best possible form of rule, because only true democracy will enable a fair and equitable coexistence and the balancing of individual interests within a state.

### **2.1 More participation**

We Pirates aim for maximum democratic equality among all people. The Pirate Party therefore strives to increase and promote every individual's direct and indirect opportunities for democratic participation.

## **2.2 Identifying new ways**

Digital mediums enormously improve the speed at which information is exchanged in society. Today, it is easy to scan large quantities of information and make it accessible to everyone. All this enables completely new and previously unthinkable solutions for the distribution of power within a state. Decentralized administration and the introduction of distributed systems are greatly facilitated.

The digital revolution brings humanity the opportunity of advancing democracy, which allows to reinforce freedom and civil rights, especially free speech and each individual's ability to participate. The Pirate Party sees its purpose in attending and shaping the adjustment of living democracy in Germany to the opportunities of the 21st century.

## **2.3 Reinforcing separation of powers and freedom**

We Pirates see maximum and sensible separation of powers within the state as absolutely essential. An independent judiciary - especially with regard to the German Constitutional Court - must be strengthened and promoted, since this court has repeatedly proven to be a guardian of individual rights against the legislative and executive powers. We Pirates are convinced that society must never patronize the individual. In order to allow citizens to make informed decisions, we need a good, decentralized, independent, multifaceted and ever-vigilant publicative power, consisting of the press, blogs and other forms of public mediums. This power is essential for the proper functioning of a democracy. We see it as the duty of the state and of every democrat to enable this critical publicative and to protect it against interference. The state's duty is not to patronize the individual, but to respect and preserve individual rights and to protect individuals against infringements of their civil rights, even against the majority. One individual's freedom reaches its limits where it unduly impinges on another individual's freedom.

## **2.4 More democratic elections**

We Pirates support more freedom and independence of individuals in parliament. In order to reduce party discipline and pressure on individual members of parliament, voters must have more influence on who is elected into the parliament. For this purpose, the voters must be given the option of splitting their vote between candidates of different parties and to support individual candidates by means of accumulation, even for elections on the national and state levels. The influence of tactical voting must be reduced, so as to allow small and new parties to achieve their full voter potential.

## **3 Copyright and non-commercial reproduction**

The ancient dream of compiling all human knowledge and culture and to store it for the present and future is within close grasp thanks to the rapid technological development of the past decades. Like all groundbreaking innovations, it encompasses numerous spheres of life and leads to profound changes. It is our goal to seize the opportunities of this

situation and to warn against potential dangers. The present legal framework for copyrights limits the potential of the current development, since it is based on an outdated concept of so-called intellectual property,"which opposes the goal of a knowledge and information society.

### **3.1 No restrictions on copying**

Technical systems which obstruct or prevent the reproduction of creative products ("copy protection,DRM,ëtc.) create artificial scarcity in order to turn a public good into a private one for economic purposes. The creation of artificial scarcity purely for economic purposes seems immoral to us, therefore we reject these technologies. In addition, these technologies obstruct the authorized use of such creative products in many ways. They also make it possible to control and monitor users in completely unacceptable ways and jeopardize the ability of future generations to use these creative products, since they might lack access to today's media devices. The economic costs for establishing a complete and consistent copy protection infrastructure are also strikingly disproportionate to the achieved economic benefit. Indirect follow-up costs due to more difficult interoperability of media devices and software further increase these costs.

### **3.2 Free copying and free use**

Since the reproduction of digital products cannot be restricted in a technically sensible manner and the widespread enforcement of prohibitions in the private sphere has obviously failed, the chances of making creative products available to the public must be recognized and utilized. We are convinced that non-commercial reproduction and use of creative products should be seen as a natural process, which does not affect the interests of most originators in a negative manner, despite objections from certain interest groups. No such relationship could be reasonably proven in the past. In fact, there is a multitude of innovative business models which make conscious use of free availability to their advantage and can decrease the dependence of originators on existing market structures. We therefore demand that copying, providing access to, storing and using creative products for non-commercial purposes must not just be legalized, but actively promoted to improve the public availability of information, knowledge and culture, because this is a prerequisite for the social, technological and economic development of our society.

### **3.3 Promotion of culture**

We see it as our responsibility to promote creative production, especially with regard to cultural diversity. Positive effects of the changes we demand must be available to the fullest extent. If possible, potential but unexpected negative side-effects must be reduced.

### **3.4 Reconciling interests between originators and the public**

We acknowledge originators' personal rights to their products to the fullest extent. Today's management of exploitation rights, however, is not adequate for creating a fair balance between justified economic interests of originators and the public interest in access to knowledge and culture. The process behind a creative product usually draws heavily from the public wealth of intellectual creations. The reintroduction of creative products into the public domain is therefore not only justified, but essential to ensure the sustainability of human creativity.

Therefore, a fair framework for the reintroduction of creative products into the public domain must be created. This means, in particular, a drastic reduction of copyright periods, far below the periods specified in the TRIPS agreement.

## **4 Patenting**

As we transition from the industrial age to the information age, global patent laws are becoming obstacles to innovation rather than incentives. The attempt to design the future by conventional means not just fails to take into account the fundamental changes in the world, it also poses a great danger to tomorrow's society due to patenting of innovations in the fields of genetic engineering, biotechnology and software patents. What we want is a more free market without the obstructions of contemporary patenting practice. We demand that the patent system be reformed or replaced by more adequate regulations. Under no circumstances must it be expanded by regulations that further inhibit innovation.

### **4.1 Opening of markets and dismantling of private monopolies**

Increasing dismantling of monopolies and opening of markets are professed goals of our party. Patents, a form of government-backed private monopolies, lead to an artificial reduction of public welfare, which requires constant justification and supervision. Patenting of industrial goods in the past is widely considered a success story, but this can neither be proved nor disproved. However, the social and economic circumstances have changed fundamentally in the post-industrial globalized society. Moreover, increased international competition leads to abuse of the patenting system, so that there is often no longer any discernible benefit for society. Therefore, we want to stop the increasing abuse of patents. Patenting of trivial inventions or abuse of patents to block progress must be prevented under all circumstances. This is especially true for the pharmaceuticals industry. The large cash requirements and the monopolistic structures in this market require reorganization to put society's resources to good use instead of wasting them because of blockades for the benefit of individuals. Patents on pharmaceuticals also have very objectionable effects from an ethical point of view.

## 4.2 Patents in the information society

Economic success in the information society no longer just depends on technical inventions, but on knowledge, information and how they are developed. Attempts to regulate these factors by using the patent system are diametrically opposed to our demand for free knowledge and culture for humanity. We reject patents on organisms and genes, on business ideas and on software, because they have unreasonable and unjustifiable consequences, because they obstruct the advancement of the knowledge society, because they privatize public goods without compensation and without any emergency and because they do not constitute inventions in the original sense. The good development of small and medium IT companies throughout Europe has shown that patents are completely unnecessary in the software sector.

## 5 Free, democratically controlled technical infrastructure

In our modern information and communication society, it is of supreme importance that all citizens have complete control over the processing of their information and their communication at any time, should they wish to do so. This freedom for all citizens is intended to prevent the concentration of power over systems and data in the hands of individuals. The aim is to distribute power as broadly as possible over all citizens and thus secure their freedom and their privacy.

### 5.1 Open standards

Free and continual access for users to data of all kinds with systems of their choice can only be ensured if this data is available in a format that corresponds to open standards. The situation is similar for the combination of different technical systems. Given the same functionality, they are only exchangeable if the interface conforms to open standards. Therefore we support the consistent use and spread of open standards. This decreases dependence on individual manufacturers and enables free competition between technical solutions. An open standard is a protocol or format which meets the following criteria:

- All participants have full, equal and public access and can evaluate and use it equally.
- There are no components or extensions that depend on formats or protocols which do not conform to this definition.
- There are no legal or technical clauses that restrict use by any party or business model.
- Development is independent of any one manufacturer, in a process that is open to equal participation by competitors or third parties.
- Different complete implementations by different manufacturers are available, or it is a completely free implementation.



## **5.2 Free software**

We support the promotion of software that can be used, analyzed, disseminated and changed by everyone, without restrictions. This so-called free software guarantees users the basic freedom necessary to take control of their own technical systems and to develop them collectively and democratically, if need be. This provides a significant contribution to strengthening the autonomy and privacy of all users. Particularly educational institutions and the entire public administration must work towards switching their entire technical infrastructure to free software step by step, so as to reduce public expenditures and dependence on individual manufacturers in the long run.

## **6 Participation in digital life**

The shift towards a digital society constitutes a significant leap in development. It substantially affects our social life, political processes and economic activities. Free communication is a catalyst for the advancement of society, and new digital technologies uncover previously unknown potentials. The free flow of information creates responsible citizens who are able to effectively protect their freedom against totalitarian tendencies. Free networking makes it possible to easily bring together supply and demand of all sorts. Modern society is hard to imagine without digital communication. The state's actions should be geared towards securing and promoting it.

### **6.1 Access to digital communication**

Communication through digital networks, such as the Internet, plays an increasingly important role. Without the opportunity to participate, real freedom of speech or free personal development are no longer possible.

Access to digital communication enables full participation in society, free publication, access to public information as well as education and cultural and economic activities online. This access must never be inhibited - neither temporarily nor permanently, neither in part nor in its entirety.

Instead, it must be guaranteed that each member of society has the opportunity to obtain adequate access to digital communication. Adequate quality and speeds for data transmission must be ensured, even in rural areas, to give people access to the most common features. No town or village may be excluded from fully participating in digital life. This goes for landline and mobile connections. Therefore, the available frequencies must be accessible to a broad and democratic civil user base. When reserving and assigning frequency ranges, the social benefit from free use and access to all stakeholders must have precedence over financial interests.

In order to eliminate economic obstacles that limit the access to digital communication, each member of society must have the statutory right to participate. The social safety nets must enable those who lack the financial means to create the required technical environment to purchase and operate the necessary technology.

## 6.2 Possible uses of digital communication

Digital society communicates through the Internet and numerous connected subnetworks, which are operated by a multitude of providers. They form a virtual public sphere, access to which must be equally accessible to everyone. Providers' control over the virtual public sphere must not be abused to impose targeted restrictions upon individual participants. Targeted blocking or bandwidth restrictions would impose unacceptable restrictions on both providers of a service and their customers. Only if every user and every service offered are treated equally will everyone be able to use the Internet to the fullest extent. Discrimination against individuals would promote the creation of monopolies, restrict the Internet's innovative potential and lead to restrictions of free speech.

Government regulation is necessary to maintain a free Internet for all and ensure neutrality and equal treatment of all users by Internet service providers. To secure the operation of individual services which place high demands on network capacity this Internet neutrality may only be broken if a further extension of capacities is no longer possible.

The expansion and modernization of networks must be ensured for the future. It may not be endangered through monopolization of communication channels. In order to promote permanent competition, and thereby stimulate investments and innovation, no new infrastructure monopolies may be granted and existing ones may no longer be upheld. We must instead strive for a high degree of decentralization, especially by promoting non-commercial projects that follow this principle.

The state must guarantee free and equal access to the public part of the Internet and protect it against corporate interests, but also against political interference. Under no circumstances may there be any government coercion to filter or manipulate the transferred data. Consistent equal treatment of all data in neutral networks can only be guaranteed if the data is transmitted without monitoring of contents and regardless of information about senders or recipients. The state must not be allowed to require operators of Internet subnetworks to analyze transmitted data via deep packet inspection (DPI) and operators must not be allowed to use this method.

The fight against Internet crime must begin where it is most effective: With senders and recipients of non-permissible data. Fighting crime is the duty of government authorities, who hold the government monopoly on violence for this purpose. It is not the task of access providers and network operators to proceed against crime in the virtual public sphere of the Internet. They must not be turned into private investigative authorities, granted arbitrary powers of defense, or even serve as correctional authorities. These providers are responsible for ensuring proper, free operation of the Internet and for providing access to all members of society, but not for monitoring user behavior. They must not be made responsible or liable for the criminal activities of their customers.

## 6.3 Learning how to use digital technology

The Internet and other digital mediums are leading to increasingly greater social changes. They create new opportunities for self-fulfillment, but also create new chances and

risks. A modern society must make use of these developments by accompanying them scientifically and sharing acquired mediums skills with all of its members. All people should be able to profit from new innovations and to protect themselves against dangers by using mediums competently and critically.

In order to impart media skills, curriculums and technical equipment of schools must always be up to date. Critical use of modern mediums, efficient use and creative design must be a fixed part in all public school curriculums. Not just schools, but also parents play an important part here. In the complex world of media, parents must receive the necessary help to keep up with developments. To facilitate their role as educators, they must learn about the world their children grow up in, the possibilities and the dangers.

No one must be left out of this rapid development. Older people must also be given to opportunity to take part in digital public life, to the extent they wish to do so. Older people must also be offered various kinds of training so they can acquire the necessary media skills to partake in social life. The special needs of senior citizens must be taken into account and proper accessibility must be assured in general. They must be supported in all elementary areas of media skills. Targeted government programs are also necessary.

#### **6.4 Digital society worldwide**

Free communication through digital networks allows our society to reinforce classic freedoms such as freedom of speech and free personal development. It creates informed citizens and strengthens democratic discourse, while new sectors are added to the economy and contribute to the wealth of society. Therefore, efforts towards the establishment of free communication networks in other countries must also be welcomed and supported. They enable more democratic forms of government around the world, more informed and tolerant societies and, consequently, more stable structures. The establishment of free communication networks must become a part of German development aid all around the world, wherever feasible.

Free communication networks around the world have time and again been threatened by censorship. These attempts are usually directed against the country's own population and against the freedoms of its own citizens. Under no circumstances must Germany support censorship in other countries. The technical prerequisites for censorship must not be created at home or tolerated abroad. Initiatives - political or technical in nature - for undermining filtering systems must be supported to the extent that foreign relations permit.

### **7 Privacy and data protection**

Privacy and data protection are necessary to safeguard people's dignity and freedom. Countless lives were lost in the past to establish and protect our modern, liberal democracy. The 20th century alone saw two dictatorships in Germany whose terror was based on lack of respect for individual rights and ubiquitous control. However, dictators of past times would never have dreamed of the technical means we have today. A monitored society is being created, simply because the technical means are there, and it serves the

interests of government and business. The Pirate Party takes a decided stance against this type of monitoring. No matter how well each individual step on the road towards a police state is justified, we Europeans know from experience where this road leads, and we want to avoid this at all costs.

## **7.1 Privacy**

The right to privacy protection is a crucial foundation for a democratic society. Freedom of speech and the right to self-fulfillment cannot be realized without these requirements. Systems and methods the state can employ against its citizens must be subject to constant evaluation and scrutiny from elected officials. If the government monitors people not suspected of a crime, this is a fundamental and unacceptable breach of the civil right to privacy. Every citizen must be guaranteed the right to anonymity, which is part of our constitution. Under no circumstances must the state be allowed to share personal data with private enterprises. The basic right of privacy of mail correspondence must be expanded to include all forms of communication. The government must only be allowed to access means of communication or to monitor citizens if there is substantiated evidence that this citizen will commit a crime. In all other cases, the government must assume that its citizens are innocent and leave them alone. The basic right to confidentiality of communication must receive strong legal protection, since governments have proven repeatedly that they are not to be trusted where sensitive information is concerned. Particularly data retention without substantiated evidence not only opposes the principle of innocent until proven guilty, but also all other principles of a free democratic society. The predominant trend towards mass surveillance is a much more serious threat to our society than international terrorism and creates a climate of distrust and fear. Extensive mass surveillance of public spaces, questionable dragnet investigations, central databases with unproven suspicions are means which we reject.

## **7.2 Informational self-determination**

The individual's right to control the use of his personal data must be strengthened. Especially data protection officers must be permitted to act with complete autonomy. New methods, such as scoring, make it necessary not just to give people control over their personal data, but also over all other data which can be used to try them in court. All citizens must have an enforceable claim against administrators of central databases to demand disclosure of their personal information at no cost, and also for correction, blocking or deletion of their data. Due to the high risk of abuse, collection and use of biometric data and genetic tests require particularly critical assessment and review by independent authorities. The establishment of centralized databases containing such information must be avoided. In general, the requirements for the protection of personal data must take into account the special features of digital data, such as longevity and ease of unsupervised dissemination. Precisely because the Pirate Party works towards more freedom of information, culture and knowledge, it demands more economic use of data, avoidance of unnecessary creation of data and independent supervision over

the handling of personal data which has potential commercial or administrative uses and hence might be used to curtail the freedom and informational self-determination of citizens in an unnecessary manner.

## **8 Transparency of the state**

Our Modern society develops very rapidly. More and more information is being accumulated and more and more information is being interlinked. Linked information, however, is knowledge, and knowledge is power, as the saying goes. Hence, if the access to knowledge is restricted to a small circle of benefactors, there is an unavoidable development of power structures which put individual persons, social organizations or government organs at an advantage and thereby jeopardize the democratic process in a free society. The democratic process is based on broad participation of all citizens in the design and supervision of social processes; it is therefore incompatible with information advantages, which individuals are trying to gain, to the detriment of society. Transparency of administrative and political processes on all levels of government is therefore a fundamental civil right. It must be guaranteed, protected and enforced to support our free democratic order. The current situation in Germany is determined by a large number of different regulations on all levels and in all areas of government activity. Little has been changed to facilitate a shift from the "principle of secrecy" towards the "principle of public disclosure, even though public disclosure is characteristic of the agenda for a modern 21st century society, also with regard to the many opportunities offered by new forms of media. Administrators and politicians must finally recognize that they are public service providers and ensure transparency, based on efficient, easy and low-cost access to information for all citizens. It is crucial, particularly for the evaluation of political decision-makers, to ensure transparent access to the bases for political decisions. Two negative examples: the fact that the highway toll agreement is concealed from the sovereign - i.e. the people - and their elected representatives and the undemocratic introduction of voting machines, which have the potential to damage the electoral process, which is the primary element of any democracy. In this sense, the Pirate Party wants to work towards the transparency of all government processes and hence demands: Every citizen, whether affected or not and without need to provide a justification, has the right to gain access to files on all levels of government and to the information available to the respective public authorities. This applies to written records as well as to digital mediums or other types of mediums. This right is limited by the regulations for the protection of personal rights, national security, crime prevention and similar concerns. These exceptions must be formulated as precisely and unambiguously as possible and may not leave out entire agencies or administrative areas. The information agency is required provide access to records or copies promptly and with a clear cost structure, to enable widespread, efficient use of the data. The denial of access must be justified in writing. The applicant and the affected third parties can invoke a court to check the denial and the public authority must give the court full access to the information. The public authorities are required to regularly publish organizational descriptions and task descriptions, including overviews

of the types of records that can be accessed, as well as an annual public report about the treatment of the right to information. Taking into consideration the enormous possibilities that occur with the quick development and dissemination of new media, there are various approaches for taking these basic demands into account. Government authorities should strongly promote the use of free software, set up automatic publication of appropriate records and establish the cheapest and least complex form of digital access. The renunciation of the "principle of secrecy," the administrative and political concept of a completely outdated concept of state, and the promotion of the "principle of publicity," with responsible citizens as the basis for government activity and planning - the Pirate Party is convinced that these principles are the crucial prerequisites for a modern knowledge society with a free, democratic order. The Pirate Party supports compulsory identification for police officers. Officers on duty during public assemblies must be required to wear identification which is clearly distinguishable, even from a distance. This identification must be in the form of a pseudonym (a number, for example) and may change from deployment to deployment. It must be possible to identify a person by their identification at any time after the deployment, given an official court order. The senior officer is responsible for the effective enforcement of the identification requirements and for the correct keeping of the records for the assignment of identification to persons. Police officers must be legally required to prevent breaches by other police officers or, if not possible, to report and identify the respective officer or officers. Violations of these duties (wearing identification, correct maintenance of the assignment list, prevention/reporting of breaches) must be punishable under criminal law.

## 8.1 Open contracts with businesses

Contracts between public institutions/agencies/government bodies/etc. and private businesses must be made public to create a more transparent state.

- Secret contracts with private business are not permissible.
- Previously closed contracts must be made accessible to the public.
- All calls for tenders must be transparent and public. After the award, all bids must be published, as well as the reasons for the selection of the winning bid.
- Calls for tenders must be designed in such a way that the contract cannot be completed by one previously selected company only.
- Contracts must be designed in such a way that the completion of the contract causes no greater danger to people and the environment than if the state had completed the contract.
- Information about contracts closed with the state (citizen, taxpayer) must always be made accessible to the general public, not just to a very limited circle of government representatives. No consideration can be given to alleged business secrets (e.g., costs, promised profits) included in contracts. In justified cases, e.g., in case

of danger for life and limb, a limited exception (e.g., 10 years at most) can be defined, for which certain information included in contracts can be kept secret.

## **9 Open access to public content**

The Pirate Party demands that all content created by public authorities or with public subsidies be freely accessible to the general public. Accessibility must not be obstructed by application procedures, licenses, fees or technical means. Content is made available online in open formats and archived. Dissemination and commercial exploitation are expressly permitted. Exceptions from the publication duty are only possible for significant reasons; these must be explained in writing for every individual case. The Pirate Party stands for consistent democracy, openness and transparency. We want every person to have the basic means to understand and evaluate the workings of all public and publicly financed organs (freedom of information). This requires that all information created here is made freely available immediately, without request, in standardized form and for an unlimited duration (open data). The citizens, as principal, must have the right to access, use and disseminate publicly financed content whenever they wish (open commons). We are against secrecy, compartmentalization and misled competitive thinking in the public sector. We intend to use freely communicable knowledge to make the public sector more efficient, more transparent and more manageable. Particularly in the field of science, funding must be conditional on the free publication of the achieved knowledge (open access).

## **10 Education**

### **10.1 Education in a free democratic society**

Every person has the right to free access to information and knowledge. This is necessary in a free democratic society to guarantee a maximum of social participation to all people, regardless of their social background. Considering this goal, the main requirement of institutional education is to support the development of responsible, critical and social individuals. The main focus must be on the learners' interests. Free access to information and education is not just necessary with regard to social development, however, but also for the economic development of our society. Education is one of the major resources of the German economy. Only by preserving, sharing and multiplying knowledge can we secure progress and social change in the future. Investments in education are investments in the future.

### **10.2 The public education infrastructure**

Free access to educational institutions is in everyone's best interest. Therefore it is the task of society, represented by the state, to fund a powerful, appropriate educational infrastructure and to make it widely available. Private financing of public educational institutions is favorable, as long as it has no influence on existing curriculums. Tuition

fees of any kind limit the access to education, therefore we reject them in all instances. For the same reason, freedom of educational materials must be supported. The best way to ensure this freedom is to support and develop more free materials for the sharing of knowledge. These free creations are not just available free of charge for teaching purposes, but also allow instructors to adapt them to their lessons without legal impediments. Even though the government is responsible for public education, learning in public institutions cannot replace parental education. A comprehensive educational system requires that both forms of education complement and support each other.

### **10.3 Education as an individual process**

Each human is an individual with personal preferences, strengths and weaknesses. Institutional education therefore intends to support individuals in developing their talents, reducing their weaknesses and discovering new interests and skills. In addition to rigid timetables and schedules, some forms of assessing educational attainment do not meet these requirements. What we reject is an evaluation of behavior based on criteria of conformity, e.g., school grades for work ethic and social behavior. Curricula must be based on well-founded and verifiable knowledge and must be taught from a neutral standpoint. This requires objective presentation, balanced points of view and a critical assessment of sources.

### **10.4 Democratization of educational facilities**

Educational facilities leave a lasting impression on the lives of the students who attend them. Therefore, they must be viewed as a habitat for the learners. Students must be able to participate in the organization and make use of these institutions at all times. A democratic organization of educational institutions must give learners, as well as other interest groups at educational institutions, an appropriate measure of influence. This will teach attendees how to live democratic values, enable higher acceptance for decisions and strengthen the feeling of community within the educational institutions.

### **10.5 Early childhood education**

Early childhood education is of central importance for the goals of the Pirate Party. Its purpose is to enable all children - regardless of existing differences - to develop their personal skills in such a manner that they can begin their school career with the best possible prerequisites - despite their social and cultural heritage or any physical and emotional handicaps or deficits.

Therefore, the Pirate Party supports free childcare with optional full-time supervision in childcare centers with reasonable opening hours, located close to people's residences or workplaces for all children over the age of three. The Pirate Party also demands that the educational mission of childcare centers and kindergartens be recognized that they be financed in a similar manner as schools.



## **10.6 Media skills**

Finding, understanding, assessing and disseminating information in various forms is becoming increasingly important in the future. Over the last years, the amount of freely available information has become so great that no individual could reasonably process it all. Therefore, the semi-automatic selection of information - which makes it easier to understand - is gaining importance. Cultural differences make it difficult for users to understand information by some authors; on the other hand, comprehensive online references allow people to look up unfamiliar terms within seconds. This means that a growing part of the knowledge necessary to understand concepts is not imparted by way of general education, but is acquired as necessary. In a time where information is practically freely available, it becomes more and more important to evaluate information. Each capable interest group is interested in disseminating its own view of the world through as many information channels as possible. Since costs are negligible nowadays, this has become much easier than in the past. At the same time, the classic media landscape is changing. Tasks that were formerly performed by professional journalists, must now be performed by individual readers. In addition, our natural sense for heuristics, i.e., the tendency to trust certain types of information more than others, has become virtually useless due to advances in imaging and video editing. Advertising psychologists are actively working on influencing people subconsciously. We must educate people and develop their ability to filter medial influences, including music and olfactory stimuli.

## **10.7 Learning goals instead of curricula**

Each lesson has the aim of teaching the learners something they did not know before or to reinforce something they already know through repetition. This is done by letting learners work consciously on a topic or by teaching them to learn behaviors and procedures as they work on a different topic. Where the selection of topics and procedures is of no particular relevance for the educational goal, the learners will select them. Learners must be informed about the educational goals they are pursuing. The educational goals should be set in such a manner that general educational goals - under consideration of learners' previous knowledge, skills and interests - should be largely attainable.

## **11 Right to secure livelihood and social participation**

Each person has the right to a secure livelihood and social participation. Respecting and protecting human dignity is the highest commandment of the German Basic Law. People can only live in dignity if their basic needs are met and their social participation is assured. In our monetary economy, this requires an income. If an income can only be achieved through work, we must assure full employment to protect all people's dignity. This is why full employment has been a major goal of our economic policy in the past. There are two paths by which we try to achieve this goal: Through economic measures which aim to create jobs or through publicly financed jobs with the main goal of securing people's livelihood. These are both detours which require substantial public funding. If

public funds are used, however, this must be done as efficiently as possible. Since the goal is to secure an income and a livelihood for everyone, this income should be guaranteed directly to each individual. Only this way can we protect the dignity of all people without exception. Just as we provide public security, traffic routes and large parts of the educational system without a direct compensation, a secure livelihood must also become a part of our infrastructure. We Pirates are convinced that the overwhelming majority of people will seize the chances provided by a secure livelihood to develop their full economic and social potential. A secure livelihood creates room for self-determined education, research and economic innovation. It enables volunteerism, e.g., taking care of relatives and children, independent journalism, political activity or creation of art and free software. This benefits our entire society. This is why the Pirate Party supports solutions which guarantee unconditionally a secure livelihood and social participation while sustaining and enabling economic freedom. We want to prevent poverty, not prosperity.

## **12 Gender and family policy**

The Pirate Party supports a modern gender and family policy. It is based on the principle of private self-determination, which is codified in Article 1 of the German Basic Law. The Pirate Party wants our politics to respect the increasing diversity of lifestyles. Everyone must be able to choose freely their mode of living and their preferred type of equal cohabitation. Models of cohabitation must not be based on the exploitation of individuals or the pursuit of unjustified personal benefits.

### **12.1 Free self-determination of gender and sexual identity/orientation**

The Pirate Party stands for a policy which respects and promotes free self-determination of gender and sexual identity/orientation. We reject any allocation to specific genders or gender roles by others. Discrimination based on gender, gender roles or sexual identity/orientation is wrong. Social structures which are the result of gender role models do not accommodate the requirements of individuals and must therefore be overcome.

- The Pirate Party is against the collection of gender information by public authorities. As a transitional measure, instead of gender being registered automatically by the government, individuals must be allowed to choose their own gender.
- The law forcing parents to give their children gender-specific first names must be abolished.
- Sex assignment surgery for intersexual children must not be permitted if this interferes with the child's right to self-determination.

### **12.2 World-wide acknowledgment and protection of self-determined gender or sexual identity and orientation**

Persecution due to gender, sexual identity or sexual orientation is wrong. If such persecution is supported officially or unofficially by governments or non-government actors in

a person's country of origin, it must be recognized as a justification for political asylum. This does not require that the victims prove their sexual identity or orientation. In many countries, people are discriminated against or criminalized for their sexual identity and orientation if it deviates from the local norms. We reject this type of discrimination or criminalization. Deviating gender or sexual identity and orientation must not be classified as a sickness or perversion.

### **12.3 Free self-determination of cohabitation**

The Pirates support plurality in modes of cohabitation. Official policies must accommodate the diversity of lifestyles and enable truly free choice of the desired form of cohabitation. We reject any preferential financial treatment of selected models based merely on historic structures.

- The Pirates support full legal equality of marriages and civil unions.
- All forms of cohabitation must be able to attain civil union status. Concepts for expanding the civil union to a registered conjugal relationship of more than two persons must be developed and implemented.
- Civil unions must take the form of a civil solidarity pact, modeled after the French PACS model. This civil solidarity pact must facilitate a more flexible transfer of rights and provide simplified and cheaper divorce procedures. It must also give notaries the right to close marriage contracts, as this is currently a monopoly of the state.

### **12.4 Free self-determination and support for families**

The Pirate Party supports the equal recognition of lifestyle models in which people assume responsibility for each other. Regardless of the chosen model, communities which nurture children or support weak persons deserve special protection. Our family policy aims at giving equal legal status to such communities.

- Equal opportunities for people taking care of children: Having children must not lead to discrimination or disadvantage. Gender or sexual identity/orientation must not be the reason for prerogatives or obligations to participate more or less in childrearing. We Pirates support the dismantling of existing social expectations which prevent or complicate real free individual decision-making.
- Tax splitting for married couples must be abolished. Fiscal privileges for individuals or communities must be given to those who take care of children and weak individuals.
- There must be sufficient childcare services to enable free self-determination of lifestyle choices. There must be a legal right to childcare beginning at birth.
- Having children must be independent of gender identity or orientation. Same-sex partnerships must also be allowed to bear, adopt and raise children.

## **13 Environment**

### **13.1 Sustainability (freedom for later generations)**

The Pirate Party stands for sustainability. Therefore we want to ensure that the basis for a dignified, free existence also exists in the future. One prerequisite is a transparent, responsible use of natural resources.

### **13.2 Livable environment (protecting livelihoods)**

We want to sustain a healthy, natural environment. This means a reduction of pollutants released into our environment and the protection and re-establishment of natural areas, particularly those with high biodiversity.

### **13.3 Use of resources**

We demand a responsible use of resources. Fossil and regenerative resources must be used sustainably. In order to sustain opportunities for upcoming generations, generative resources must be used on a large scale and replace, where possible, fossil and regenerative resources.

### **13.4 Energy policy**

We want an energy infrastructure which protects the environment and is safe in the long run. This means a change from fossil energy sources to generative and regenerative sources. Regenerative resources must be used under the condition of sustainability and must not compete with other environmental goals. In addition, we want a transparent, decentralized producer structure. Only this way can we guarantee participation of all citizens and prevent monopolies.

## **14 For more diversity**

### **14.1 Migration enriches society**

We consider diversity, which also develops when people of different heritage live together, as an enrichment to society. We recognize the mutual influence of discrimination by the social majority and segregation of people stigmatized as „foreign“. This situation is not compatible with our concept of human dignity. The technological means to cover comparatively large distances has also fundamentally changed the conditions for migration. The Federal Republic of Germany has been an immigration country for decades. In addition, it is a part of the European Union, which is itself undergoing a process of progressive integration and is gradually taking over more responsibilities. Hence, the German immigration policy faces a quadruple challenge:

### **14.1.1 The development of the European Union also leads to the completely free movement of its citizens.**

Today, citizens of the European Union enjoy unrestricted workforce mobility and choice of residence. Within the European Union we see the development towards a completely free choice of residence. Social security systems must adapt to this change. Language training offers and cultural diversity are a part of this development.

### **14.1.2 Discrimination of labor migrants for several generations is inhumane**

. People who came to the European Union as labor migrants from former colonies and overseas territories have the right to become naturalized. This includes complete integration into the educational system and the labor market, as well as the option to participate and shape our cultural and political life. Those states of the European Union which still base nationality on ancestry must introduce rules which give people born within the European Union the direct right to acquire the citizenship of their country of birth. As a consequence, multiple citizenship must be accepted for at least two generations to facilitate the integration of immigrants into the host country's political and social life. The host countries' success at integrating immigrants will be measured by the number of immigrants who are willing to renounce their foreign citizenship out of their own free will. The European states are required to give immigrants and their descendants a real chance to acquire an education and achieve professional success. Reducing discrimination and enabling all inhabitants to live together in a beneficial manner requires targeted political action. People who are not citizens of a EU state must also have the right to participate in elections for communal representatives at their main residence.

### **14.1.3 Europe needs economic migration**

The economic development of Europe depends on the promotion and utilization of the skills and abilities of all citizens who live here. Unfortunately, past efforts to educate broad segments of society often appeared to promote the opposite. But the demographic development of the European countries permits the forecast that this approach will not suffice to sustain the social security systems. Before economic and social injustice are not eliminated worldwide, the European countries are dependent on allowing everyone to settle here and contribute to Europe's economic success. This requires rules which regulate economic immigration and distinguish between economic migration and the right to asylum for victims of persecution and war. The waiting times for a secure residence permit and the chance for naturalization must be reduced significantly; special efforts by immigrants to learn the language and achieve professional integration must be supported; a lack thereof must not be used as an excuse for discrimination. Recognition of foreign degrees, certificates and diplomas must be facilitated to achieve professional integration. We need more international contractual agreements for the mutual recognition of educational degrees.

#### **14.1.4 Providing asylum from persecution and war**

Granting asylum against political persecution and the results of war and civil war are essential obligations under international law. This is a joint obligation of all European countries. Individual states' efforts to evade this obligation - Germany being one of them - run contrary to this effort. People who seek refuge in Europe have the right to a life in dignity, to free movement and to participation in the workforce, in education and culture. This right applies even if the reasons for their emigration have not been recognized yet. It also applies if it is not possible for the refugees to return to their home country.

#### **14.2 Separation of state and religion**

Cultural, religious and ideological liberty and diversity are characteristic of modern societies. Guaranteeing these liberties is a duty of the state. We Pirates see religious freedom not just as the freedom to practice a religion, but also as freedom from religious paternalism. We recognize and respect the significance which an individual's personal religion can have. Despite the constitutional freedom of religion, the government of the Federal Republic of Germany is not free from religious (and secular) privileges for the traditional Christian churches. This is a contradiction which can lead to increased social conflict due to immigration and growing religious diversity. Ensuring the state's ideological neutrality is therefore a necessary prerequisite for a positive development of society. A secular state requires strict separation of the religious and political spheres. Financial and structural privileges for individual religions, such as financial subsidization, assignment of tasks in public institutions and management of social services are highly questionable and must therefore be reduced. In order to minimize collection of personal data, collection of data on religious affiliation by government agencies must end. There is no justification for the collection of church taxes by the government.

#### **14.3 United against racism**

Racism and cultural discrimination continue to be severe problems which endanger social peace in a diverse society. Violence and intimidation due to heritage, religion or culture are unacceptable in all instances. Therefore, we must oppose racism and xenophobia in any form, just as all other ideologies of hate directed against particular groups. Social Darwinist ideologies, which depict people of certain origins as naturally superior, have been scientifically refuted and are incompatible with the values and goals of the Pirate Party, just like those ideologies which justify a „clash of cultures“ by stating that certain social groups have collective hegemonic aspirations. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are examples of such ideologies. Here we must not only focus on the political far-right; we must also oppose prejudice and intolerance at the heart of society: everyday racism, latent anti-Semitic stereotypes and the emerging trend of Islamophobia.

The Pirate Party wants to support campaigns and initiatives aimed at improving the understanding between cultures and ideologies, reducing prejudice and promoting social cohesion. We also support campaigns which oppose activities of the extreme political right and help people to exit these types of social circles.

## **15 Drug policy**

German drug policy has been relying on prohibition for almost 40 years, aiming for the unrealistic goal of a drug-free society. Substances found to have a low risk of addiction in relevant studies remain prohibited while more dangerous substances, such as alcohol and tobacco are socially accepted, just like pharmaceutical products with a comparably high risk of addiction. The state adheres to ineffective laws for the protection of minors, which ignore the real risk of substances, overburden police forces and courts and cost citizens billions of inefficiently allocated tax euros every year.

### **15.1 New drug policy**

The Pirate Party Germany supports a repression-free drug policy and demands an end to the failed prohibition. We reject the current, scientifically unsustainable classification into legal and illegal substances and demand an objective evaluation and handling of all psychoactive substances based solely on their risk potential. The current, groundless paternalization of adults in their responsible use of narcotics and stimulants runs counter to the basic principles of the Pirate Party and our concept of a responsible society. Consumers are still being criminalized, which has led to black-market trading. This must be replaced with controlled distribution and retail structures. This would create a framework which would remove many problems we face today, which occur solely due to dangerous additives and lack of hygiene.

### **15.2 Regulation, help and guidance instead of punishment**

Prevention must be honest and objective to deliver sustainable and convincing results. Necessary regulations under a new drug policy must involve all stakeholders and users to develop ideology-free, realistically feasible concepts. Laws, regulation and controlled supply rules must only be enacted in case of real dangers, not based on ideological or economic arguments. Unimpeded and uncensored access to all information on all drugs must be provided to each citizen.

### **15.3 Protection of minors**

The Pirate Party explicitly supports only sensible and necessary laws or regulations for the protection of minors. All adults must be aware of their responsibility to provide comprehensive and objective information to children and adolescents on the dangers of drug use. Effective protection of children and adolescents cannot be achieved by regulations and prohibitions; this has been proven. An open, objective treatment of the topic in the form of comprehensive public education in schools and recreation centers must complement legal regulations. Teaching children how to act responsibly is the best way to give them the strength of character to face these challenges and temptations.

## **15.4 Research and medicine**

The Pirate Party supports research with currently illegal substances for therapeutic purposes. Further blocking of scientific work based solely on dogmatic arguments is no longer acceptable. Patients must not be hindered in their free choice of treatment. Well-trained, responsible physicians and informed patients must have the full responsibility for choosing the substances used for treatment. The dangers of all used substances must be fully disclosed. Free, self-determined use does not conflict with protection, prevention and education.

## **16 Addiction policy**

Intoxication and addiction have been part of all cultures for ages. This fact requires that we deal with consumption of stimulants and their results free of prejudice and rely on a pragmatic addiction policy to prevent damage to society. The current, repressive drug policy, whose aim is abstinence, has obviously failed: It has created a black market, where neither minors nor consumers are protected and the rights of non-consumers are ignored. The Pirate Party supports an addiction policy based on scientific facts. This addiction policy is based on the following:

### **16.0.1 Comprehensive, ideology-free education**

Each desire, each craving can lead to addiction. Early prevention is necessary to prevent people from losing control over their own needs. Risk-conscious, hedonistic behavior must be based on the knowledge of effects, side-effects and possible health hazards, not just of illegal stimulants, but of all potentially addictive substances and behaviors. This knowledge must be taught to children from an early age.

### **16.0.2 Responsibility and a culture of consumption**

Only those who know how to reflect on their own needs and resist peer pressure know how to enjoy consumption in a self-conscious, self-determined manner. Consumption and intoxication belong to our society and fulfill fundamental social functions. Respect for individuals' free decisions and trust in their common sense and ability to enjoy life are the basis for establishing a culture of consumption which knows how to make use of intoxication as a creative opportunity.

### **16.0.3 Protection of minors and consumers**

The consumption and purchase of stimulants must be legalized. Otherwise, the state will not be able to regulate and intervene. By relying on prohibition, the state evades its responsibility and leaves its citizens vulnerable to an uncontrolled black market without protection of youth or minors. If stimulants were legalized, they could be subjected to quality checks by the state. Stimulants must be sold with package inserts in the future, which will include information about the type and dosage and about public aid for users.



#### **16.0.4 Help for high-risk consumers**

Not everyone can use stimulants responsibly. Addicts and people threatened by addiction need our understanding and easy access to all levels of support. The Pirates will provide damage-minimizing measures, such as free syringes and drug checking. A wide network of help and treatment centers will not just mitigate the worst circumstances, but also get relatives and co-addicts involved. This relieves the burden on the public healthcare system.

#### **16.0.5 Protection of non-consumers**

Government regulation should be limited to the prohibition of behavior which damages third parties. The state must respect the personal freedom of all citizens. The Pirates are against general drug tests for employees. These tests must be limited to dangerous jobs and occupations. Furthermore, stubborn drug policies must not obstruct medical assistance to patients suffering from pain. These five points are the basis for a drug policy tailored for responsible individuals, not the illusory goal of abstinence. Considering the billions which can be saved by stopping criminal prosecution and the billions which can be earned by introducing appropriate taxation of stimulants, we are confident that this pragmatic drug policy can be implemented.

### **17 Protection of whistleblowers**

#### **17.1 Preamble**

It needs to become entrenched in the public conscience that whistleblowing is a form of moral courage which needs to be supported and protected. Journalistic sources are already considered valuable today and are well protected in Germany. The German language has no exact translation for the term "whistleblower." To us, whistleblowers are people who publicize violations and illegal activity, such as corruption, insider trading or general hazards they witnesses at their workplace, during medical treatments, or on other occasions.

#### **17.2 Protection of whistleblowers**

The Pirate Party Germany understands that whistleblowers have an important corrective function in every free, democratic society. This requires, on one hand, the development of a general legal provision for the protection of whistleblowers. On the other hand, society must be informed that whistleblowers fulfill an important social function; for press informers, this is already established in the public conscience. The Pirate Party Germany also rejects any separation into "good" and "bad" whistleblowers. The evaluation of whistleblowing cannot and must not depend on any country's particular interest. The Pirate Party Germany supports an urgently needed general legal provision for the protection of whistleblowers. The current whistleblowing legislation passed by the German Constitutional Court and the Federal Labor Court is not comprehensible to laymen.

This creates significant legal uncertainty. Therefore, every whistleblower is exposed to incalculable risks under criminal and civil law. This requires that lawmakers give up the previous procedure of protecting individual legal areas and instead codify general and comprehensive protection for whistleblowers, including the necessary exemptions.

## **18 Law**

We reject the erosion of the right to a proper jurisdiction by phenomena such as „forum shopping“ or „itinerant tribunal“. Claimants must not be able to take an issue to court wherever they expect to have the best chances. Since legislation allows for the assumption that, when dealing with online publications, the place of effect can be any place the content can be accessed, the concept of jurisdiction at the place of effect is no longer up to date and allows people to choose courts arbitrarily. We want to clearly regulate which court is responsible for the resolution of a legal dispute.

## **19 Laws for freedom of information**

So far, German authorities have worked under the assumption of official secrecy. In order to view public administration records or retrieve information from them, citizens needed to prove a legitimate interest. However, almost all industrialized Western countries give everyone the right to view records or retrieve information from them, without the need to legitimize their requests. Germany has only been catching up to this international standard over the last few years. More and more people are beginning to understand that a transparent public administration not just strengthens the democratic participation of all citizens and decreases political alienation, but also makes it more difficult for officials to engage in manipulation and corruption. Everyone has full access to all authoritative and fiscal administrative procedures, without having to provide justification for their inquiry.

To protect this right, the Pirate Party demands the following minimum conditions for freedom of information laws:

- Exceptions, such as the protection of public interests, personal data and business secrets, must only be permitted where reasonable evidence can be provided and only under consideration of superordinate laws.
- People must be able to view and request information from records within a short, specified timeframe.
- The administrative fees for viewing records must be such that they do not obstruct the citizens' right to free information.
- Simple requests and viewing of records which require little administrative work should always be free.
- Rejections of requests must be justified and must be verifiable by a court.

- The adherence to freedom of information laws must be monitored by a freedom of information officer, whom everyone can contact with complaints.

## **20 Abolishment of compulsory membership in chambers and associations (excepting associations for lawyers, notaries and physicians)**

The Pirate Party supports the abolishment of compulsory membership in chambers and associations, such as the German Chamber of Commerce (IHK), the Agricultural Chamber and the Chamber of Trade. Associations for lawyers, notaries and physicians are exempt from this demand.