

Dear Mrs. President, ladies and gentlemen, dear Mr. Wowereit (Mayor of Berlin)

In Andreas' last speech he shed light on the programmatic aspect of the government policy address, and I would like to rise to speak in order to explain some things that are of a more general nature. The pirate parliamentary group has been part of this house since September of last year, and after the euphoria and avowals at the beginning on behalf of the parties that have already been part of the house to change their style of politics, the daily grind seems to have crept back in. I can understand your hope that we will adapt to you rather than have you adapt to us, but such black and white logic falls short.

The entrance of the pirate party into the Berlin state parliament marks a break. With us, a political party has entered, whose members are socialized by new media and the internet. That's a matter of fact you have to accept, if you want to understand our surprise and displeasure regarding the events of this parliament. We grew up in a world that offered everyone, who wanted to enter it, a neutral platform for free development of the individual. Of course, this world - the internet - involves dangers, but name me just one place where that isn't applicable.

We perceived the chances of the internet to be greater. And the equality of opportunity in the physical world, which is addressed in many election programs and this government statement, is realized in the internet. Because there, indeed, no one cares where you come from, what gender you have or what religion you belong to. You just have to convince by what you do. Such a parallel society - and I'm using this term intentionally at this point - is becoming even more important at this moment, in which more and more citizens of our society are ignored by the social system or don't want to be pressed in existing social conventions.

The pirates don't represent the schools' darlings, but instead the Nerds, the outsiders; those that weren't invited to the parties during their time in school; those that did not stand in the middle of the community heckling sarcastically, pretending compassion.

Yes, and a short while ago you talked about solidarity, and now you say 'Aww' at something like this; you should be ashamed of yourselves!

Because of the internet we are at the eye of the storm of a process involving all of society, the end of which we can not see yet. The social change, caused by the

internet as a technology is noticeable, and we shouldn't let the chance go by to shape that change. The internet ruthlessly changes the paradigms of the 19th and the 20th century.

What is knowledge, what is work, what are qualifications in a world that offers me all information by the push of a button? At best we are engaging with the symptoms of a changing world. But we have to start to engage with the causes. At the same time we can't react with solutions from the 20th century to the problems of the 21st century.

In the meantime the internet can do more. It is not just Google and eBay, but also the democratic participation of many. As a parliament we cannot ignore the technological leaps of the last years. The problem is that this house does not reward innovation.

But why should it, since it itself is about continuity, and in the moment when 149 persons as elected representatives substitute 3.5 million citizens of Berlin, it is about a reduction of complexity. Yes, and it is about power. In the moment in which this house decides the citizens' involvement in the political process, it is about the fear to abolish itself. But fear not: We abolished ourselves quite some time ago already.

Because what does your government policy address really mean, Mr Wowereit? It was you who declared today what is supposed to happen during the next 5 years. How is it going to come about? Through laws. Who decides on those laws? This house. But: Where are these laws written? Who of the present representatives is Mr. or Mrs. "drafted-by-consultant"? Where is this consultant sitting? He sits in the administration. It is a sad reality that this house is not fulfilling its constitutional task to generate laws out of its midst. It will be a sad reality that over the next 5 years every change will come out of the Senate, and every change will be nodded through by the (ruling) coalition, with them grinding their teeth or not. And the opposition will cry. And the opposition will make suggestions, and the coalition will cry. At this point I explicitly speak to the backbenchers in the parliamentary groups: Did you imagine it this way, is this worth for you? To nod through what Mr. or Mrs. "drafted-by-consultant" wrote in some Senate administration for five years? The free mandate, anchored in the constitution, is becoming a maculation in the state parliament week in week out. And who in here has the backbone left to disagree with his or her parliamentary group in public

This toeing of the parliamentary party line, which again toes the Senate line is a danger for democracy. When we are talking here about the dangers of lobbyism and more transparency in this house we misjudge that the lobbyist comes to those writing the law, not to those nodding the law through.

There are not debates taking place in this house anymore, but a Punch and Judy show, the roles divided by coalition and opposition. There is a concentration of power at the Senate taking place that is not healthy. In the light of the challenges facing the City of Berlin it is noteworthy that we, as representatives, only obliged to our conscience, put up with this.

The solution is just as simple as radical: the state constitution says in § 59 section 2: "bills can be contributed by the middle of the parliament, by the senate or by public initiative". Let's remove "by the senate". Let's provide the members of this parliament with the authority to write laws, so that real debates are taking place in this house - relevant and cross-party. Try to imagine how motivating it can be, if you put a bill through after a hard debate, on which you worked on with much blood, sweat and tears.

But of course I know: this is just wishful thinking. After my speech, you will argue with enough reasons to explain why the system that we have for over 50 years now is good and must be continued. You will in particular explain to yourselves that you play an important role in what is taking place in this house. And even if what I just said should have reached you, you will not be bold enough to discuss it within your parliamentary group, within your party.

During our election campaign we had a billboard with the slogan "Why am I hanging here, you're not going to vote anyway?". Similarly, you could put up one over this console with the headline: "Why am I talking here, I know how you are going to vote anyway?". The Pirate Party's success is also the result of a crisis of trust in our representative parliamentary system. The Citizens of Berlin wouldn't be demanding more participation if they felt they were being represented adequately in here. Has nobody here ever asked himself the question, why people, to whom electricity comes out of walls and money out of ATMs, suddenly are interested in political participation?

If we want to convince the people of Berlin that the democratic representational system is necessary, then we should all start very quickly to provide reasons for it. With a business as usual intention it will not work at all.

Thank you very much.