



Young Pirates of Europe

Annual review 2023-24

Summary

There was major progress in all areas and some clear successes such as establishing regular communications with member organisations, and organising the event in Brussels. Most of the unrealised goals were due to a shortage of active members and the overall duration of the term being shorter than the standard one year (nine and a half months, mid-April to end of January). Basic board work routines were established with development still ongoing, tools and other technical solutions in use were reviewed and alternatives trialled. Various alternatives for banking were explored and two were pursued, but progress was slow due to communication issues. The 2024 EPIC was called early for January in order to avoid having to make changes to registration and banking access twice within a few months.

Developing the organisation

The priorities designated for the term were building the organisation up to a basic standard of functioning, and re-establishing the main purpose and focus of the organisation. Out of the specific actions outlined in this section of the action plan, significant progress was made on regularising a division of labour and reviewing the document archive, as well as reconnecting with the member organisations (hereinafter “MOs”) to allow work on updated guiding documents to commence.

Board work routines

The board has settled into a routine of a minimum of one board meeting per month. Minutes are taken collectively, with the secretary-general reviewing them, and finally having them checked by the rest of the board who were present for the meeting. Some decisions have been taken between board meetings; in these cases, the decisions have been separately noted and a record of them made during the next board meeting.

Banking

The goal of opening a bank account was once again not met. However, at the time of writing, we are fairly far along in talks with the Luxembourgish national bank Spuerkeess. According to the most recent updates provided by Rebecca Lau of YPLU/PPLU who has acted as liaison between the board and the bank, the account opening is pending a final confirmation.

Updating YPE’s records in the Luxembourgish Business Registry took well into October. The treasurer, until this point responsible for researching alternatives for banking as well as potential transparency solutions, went inactive around the same time. The task was taken up by the secretary general, who



began, along with and supported by Christian Welter of YPLU/PPLU, attempts to reach out to one of the Luxembourgish banks: BGL BNP Paribas. Establishing contact and providing the required documents and information to BGL took until the end of November, and BGL in turn took until the final week before the end-of-year holidays to get back. It was ambiguous from BGL's communications whether they expected all or only some of the board to travel to Luxembourg to finalise the account opening. In early January, we got clarification that this referred only to the people with signatory powers.

By this point, we had also resumed the search for alternatives, with the help of Florian Roussel. Spuerkeess, another Luxembourgish bank, quickly became the main alternative as the one YPLU/PPLU uses and has good experience with. Other options such as non-bank online payment institution Sogexia were considered, but dropped after a brief deliberation - while potentially faster to establish, they are riskier in case of financial shocks than traditional banks. Another important factor was the uncertainty around the attitudes of various potential grant funding sources towards non-bank solutions.

The requirement of one or several board members with signatory powers having to be onsite to finalise the opening of the bank account, by both of the banks considered and contacted, was a major factor in the board's decision to call an early EPIC for 2024.

Administration and continuity

There were no previously established good practices or formal guidelines for administration. There was consensus among the board about wanting to reduce reliance on Google Workspace. A decision was made to use GitHub as an open and more permanent archive for board meeting minutes and other notes, with the PPEU Nextcloud instance serving as a more permanent archive. While both have seen some use, various uncertainties regarding usability and reliability have led the board to restart the search for better alternatives.

Although a lot of intentional focus was put into establishing work routines, the specific goal of producing more formal protocols or other instructional documents for running the organisation was not realised. This was due to the near-complete lack of existing conventions and the board being short of several active members for the latter half of the term, which had to be compensated for by shifting priorities.

Work on a shared values document

A discussion took place about the creation of a guiding document on shared values during the third call with MOs on November 8th. The language around this varies from "vision" (regarding the text on the soon-to-be-retired website, set in the mid-2010s to guide the organisation until 2021) to "manifesto" and "programme". For the time being, the working designation of the document is "manifesto", which is intended as a document of political values representing Young Pirates of Europe (hereinafter "YPE") and its member organisations.



The work was begun in November by surveying MOs about their key political topics and ideologies. Members of the board created a summary of the results, which was presented to participants during the Brussels trip in December. Further notes were taken from a discussion based on the summary. A working group focusing on the manifesto was established, with Samuel Enenkl responsible for coordination. The work will be carried on into the following term.

Activities

The outlined minimum goals of organising at least two in-person international activities and remote international activities were not met.

One in-person event was organised with the cooperation of the Pirate delegation in the European Parliament. A total of 18 young pirates representing all 7 MOs as well as the former MO YPSI gathered in Brussels from 14th to 17th of December 2023. Of these, 16 were part of a visitor group invited and sponsored by MEP Patrick Breyer, and the remaining two were Luxembourgish sponsored by their respective MO YPLU. The event spanned from Thursday to Sunday, consisting of two full days of programme and separate arrivals and departures days with informal social gatherings. The feedback received for the event was overwhelmingly positive, with several participants expressing a newfound or increased interest in becoming more involved with the organisation.

A four to five-day winter camp in Czechia was planned for February, but the planning was discontinued in late November due to insufficient progress and uncertainties around feasibility.

Online events were discussed early on in the term but deprioritised due to a lack of particular interest from any of the active board members.

Major factors in coming up short of the set goals for a number of activities were the board being short on active members, especially in the latter half of the term, and the term's overall length ending up at roughly nine and a half months instead of the full year often assumed as the default duration.

Communications

The board made focused and successful efforts to establish regular communications with member organisations, as very specifically outlined in the action plan for the term: online meetings in the form of Jitsi calls have been held roughly every two months starting July 2023. There have been a total of four online meetings to date, and there has been a representative from every current MO present for nearly every one of these. The typical MO meeting agenda consists of announcements and an update on recent activities from the YPE board and a round of updates from each MO, with room for questions and casual discussion.



In September, a Signal group chat was created to connect engaged people from the MOs with each other, as well as the board. The group quickly proved to be a more effective way to reach the MOs than Mattermost. Based on this experience, Signal was chosen as the go-to solution for communication around events and working groups.

Expectations and responsibilities regarding YPE-MO communications were discussed at times during the term, but no concerted efforts were made to formalise them. For the time being, the renewed regular contact between YPE and all the member organisations has been sufficient by itself to prevent most of the lapses in communications typical to previous years.

After a review of the current website, the board opted for a complete overhaul instead of revisions. The main considerations in this decision were maintainability as well as overall structure and design, none of which the existing website does well on. As the new website is still under development, the work will be carried on into the following term. Mili Slouková has been responsible for graphic design, with Michal Ketner handling the technical implementation and development. The main challenge faced has been constraints on the time the developer has had available for the project. The board has also been preparing the contents of the website by collecting and organising materials from e.g. events and member organisations.

Changes to board composition during the term

Matěj Bělohoubek resigned as president on July 24th.

Samuel Enenkl was appointed as president by the board on July 24th.

When a board member with a titled position resigns, the statutes require the board to either appoint another board member to replace them with a unanimous decision or call an EPIC FAIL at the earliest feasible time. Matěj's resignation and Samuel's appointment took place during the same board meeting after an extended discussion regarding the board's experiences of Matěj as chair during the term up to that point in time. Matěj resigned after the board voted for a proposal that effectively was a motion of no confidence. The proposal also comprised him remaining on the board as a regular board member. Samuel was then appointed as president of the board with a unanimous vote.

Christian Elia announced his resignation as a board member on October 10th. His notice, given by email to the rest of the board, did not specify a reason for his resignation.

Other notable developments

Due to the previous board not having presented a budget for the term at the April EPIC in Strasbourg, an extraordinary EPIC was called and held in the second half of May. As the decision at the April EPIC to discharge the previous board of responsibility was found to be invalid due to no budget being presented or approved, the extraordinary EPIC voted both to approve the new board's budget proposal as well as



to grant the previous board a true discharge of responsibility. In addition to these, the member organisations voted to approve the action plan presented by the new board.

Closing board

Samuel Enenkl, President, Mladé Pirátstvo

Maija Li Raudaskoski, Secretary General, Piraattinuoret

Umber Douroux, Treasurer, Jeunes Pirates

Matěj Bělohoubek, Board member, Mladé Pirátstvo

Charalampos Kyrisis, Board member, unaffiliated

Mili Slouková, Board member, Mladé Pirátstvo

Eventual length of term: 17.4.2023 - 28.1.2024