

PAN-EUROPEAN DIALOGUE ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE (EURODIG)

MESSAGES FROM STRASBOURG

Information on EuroDIG

This first Pan-European dialogue on internet governance was the initiative of a number of key stakeholders representing various stakeholder groups working in the field of Internet governance¹.

The aim of this initiative was to provide an open platform for informal and inclusive discussion and exchange between stakeholders from all over Europe on the issues to be discussed at the 2008 Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Hyderabad, India. The results of EuroDIG should therefore be fed into the IGF.

This document contains a number of messages heard from EuroDIG participants during the dialogue. These messages are not a negotiated text and do not represent consensus but are seen by EuroDIG organisers as relevant input from Europe into the global debate.

EuroDIG plans to continue future Pan-European multistakeholder dialogue forums on Internet Governance on a regular basis. More information on EuroDIG and its future activities can be found on www.eurodig.org

EuroDIG was held at the Agora Building, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, on 20-21 October 2008, and was attended by over 100 participants from all stakeholder groups and regions in Europe.

¹ Martin Boyle, NOMINET; Bertrand de la Chapelle, Envoy of the Information Society of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ayesha Hassan, International Chamber of Commerce/Business Action to Support the Information Society (BASIS-an ICC initiative); Lee Hibbard, Council of Europe; Wolfgang Kleinwächter, Professor, University of Aarhus; Yrjö Lansipuro, Ambassador, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Wolf Ludwig, Chair of the Board of the European Regional At Large Organisation (EU-RALO); Annette Mühlberg, head of e-government, new media, public administration; United Services Union (trade union: ver.di), Germany; Thomas Schneider, Information Society Coordinator, Swiss Federal Office of Communication (OFCOM); Rudi Vansnick, ISOC-ECC (listed in alphabetical order).

Key Messages

1. Multi-stakeholder dialogue is thriving in Europe. This can work even better with more and greater involvement of stakeholders throughout Europe.
2. Europe's experience in using multi-stakeholder dialogue is helping to shape policy and to raise user and business awareness of the need for engagement and informed choices about the Internet.
3. EuroDIG succeeded in bringing together a wide range of Pan-European actors to discuss and exchange their views and concerns. It framed these views and concerns and facilitated momentum for further dialogue at the Pan-European level.
4. In this connection, attention to rights and freedoms, the rule of law and democracy on the Internet has been particularly significant in this dialogue.
5. In Europe, there are a growing number of national level multi-stakeholder initiatives on Internet Governance which should be built upon and fostered at the Pan-European level.
6. National multi-stakeholder dialogue in other Pan-European states, especially in Eastern Europe, should be promoted and fostered, in particular through awareness raising and support.
7. All Pan-European stakeholders - governments, business, civil society, the technical and academic community, etc - should work together to strengthen a people-centred approach to the Internet, in particular to promote transparency, accountability and participation at all levels. In this connection, central and Eastern European states should be supported in their efforts to build and foster their capacities regarding the Internet (e.g. e-awareness, e-infrastructures, e-governance) as a means of bridging the digital divide at national and regional levels.
8. It was also highlighted that Europe has a role to play in helping developing countries to bridge the digital divide.

Security, privacy and openness:

9. The Internet's potential as a driver for economic, social and political development and innovation lies in its openness. On the Internet, citizens and businesses should enjoy a maximum of rights, freedoms and services, while being only subject to a minimum of restrictions, which are necessary to ensure the level of security and privacy they are entitled to expect.
10. People and stakeholders across Europe are concerned by the challenges to their security and privacy on the Internet. More information and guidance to users is needed to help them deal reduce and manage security and privacy intrusions; in doing so, users, in particular, young people, need to be more aware of the opportunities and risks of their online expression and communication.

11. Business will also benefit from a clarification of its freedoms, duties and responsibilities with regard to security and privacy. Coordinating the legal framework with regard to security and privacy on the Pan-European and global levels would help business understand their role and “marge de manoeuvre” in this regard.
12. Not only openness, but also mutual confidence and trust between stakeholders and users alike are important keys to the future of the Internet as a space for economic, social and political development and innovation.
13. Efforts to improve security, privacy and openness on the Internet are most effective when they are addressed together. In doing so, the perspectives for and well-being of users are consolidated and reinforced. European policies developed in this regard must be based on human rights and the rule of law.
14. Closer co-operation is needed between public authorities, business and users in order to establish appropriate systems for the secure and private handling of personal information and data.
15. Noting that online surveillance of employees' communications and behaviours in the workplace is increasing, the right to privacy for employees (and its limits) need to be addressed.
16. Cooperation between all stakeholders is needed to effectively tackle cybercrime on the Internet.
17. The treatment of personal information by social networking sites was considered to be a common concern, especially with regard to young people.

Access:

18. Access to the Internet is an integral part of the quality of the lives of many Pan-European citizens. In this regard, broadband access, especially in view of Web 2.0, is fast becoming an indispensable requirement, especially for human interaction.
19. Governments should promote affordable broadband access to the Internet for all - including persons with disabilities, the elderly and those on low incomes and the poorly educated - by fostering an enabling environment for market operators and by facilitating competition of access infrastructure (broadband via telephone lines, television cables, wireless networks, etc.).
20. Governments should consider developing universal service obligations for market operators by defining minimum quality standards and maximum prices within a technology-neutral framework. In this context, Universal Service Funds should not be misused to favour incumbents.
21. Specifications and standards for accessibility of websites should be harmonised, for instance by relying on existing standards, such as those established by the W3C or the Daisy Consortium.
22. Governments and public administrations should play a leading role in providing and promoting websites that comply with accessibility standards. They should encourage small and medium size enterprises to comply with such standards, in particular by raising their awareness and by offering them guidance on how to do so.

Critical Internet Resources:

23. Broadening the domain name space through the introduction of internationalised Domain Names and new Top-Level Domains could give European business and users' new opportunities for creative innovation and more choices. We also recognise the importance of new gTLDs, and particularly IDNs, for developing countries.
24. There needs to be more proactive measures to stimulate the transition from IPv4 to IPv6 both by public sector institutions and by private companies, including ISPs
25. Constructive and proactive European input to support and shape the development of ICANN is important, in particular in ensuring wider international accountability and improved multistakeholder engagement in consensus-based decision making.
26. Many other international and intergovernmental organisations have a major impact on the management of critical Internet resources. All these organisations need to assess how to ensure improved multi-stakeholder engagement in consensus-based decision making.
27. All bodies involved in Internet governance should ensure equitable, balanced and diverse representation of stakeholders. In particular, gender and geographical balance across and within institutions should be improved.
28. The governance issues which may emerge from the Internet of Things and the Object Numbering System might require further consideration in response to regulatory and other public-policy concerns.
29. A country's access to the Internet can be dependent on other countries because of the routing of the physical network, with an impact on national network resilience. This can also lead to external control over access to content. These concerns need to be raised internationally.
30. Europe should take a lead role in helping developing countries, in particular in Africa, to bridge the digital divide.