

## Minutes of the Friends of the Chair Call #8 - 17 December 2020 at 14:00 UTC

17 December 2020 at 2pm UTC

Attendance: Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, US; Support Unit [SU]

### Housekeeping

- Norway is stepping down from the Friends of the Chair (FotC) in 2021. SU thanked Norway for the contributions over the past several years.
- Recap of action items from the Strategy and Coordination Call and the Joint FOC/FOC-AN Roundtable Call in November
  - All action items have been completed.
- FOC outlook and calendar
  - Learning Call on US State Department Guidance on Implementing the UN Guiding Principles for Transactions Linked to Foreign Government End-Users for Products or Services with Surveillance Capabilities
    - Timing to be confirmed in early January.
    - Members are encouraged to invite colleagues working on relevant topics to the call.
  - The date for the first call of the Task Force on Digital Equality is to be identified. *[The date has since been set on Monday, 18 January.]*
    - The call for participation to remain open until further notice.
  - The next FotC call will take place on Wednesday, 27 January 2021.
  - The next FOC-Advisory Network (AN) call will be scheduled in January.
  - Finland, UK and SU are exploring different options to hold a virtual launch event on the Joint Statement on Spread of Disinformation Online in January/February 2021.
  - The next Strategy and Coordination Meeting will take place in March 2021.
  - Finland and SU will work on FOC's Open Forum topic and format for RightsCon Online in June 2021.
    - The official deadline for the call for proposals is Tuesday, 19 January, but an extension is expected to be announced.
  - The Freedom Online (FO) Conference has been confirmed for 9-10 December 2021.

**Action>>** SU to circulate a doodle poll in January to identify a suitable date for the next Strategy and Coordination Meeting.

**Action>>** SU to send Save the Date in January for the FO Conference in December 2021.

### FOC Chairship

- Finland provided an update on the FOC Chairship 2021
  - Finnish Chairship to start in January 2021.
  - Finland held a local [launch](#) event on Thursday, 10 December to launch the [national Chairship priorities](#), based on the FOC Program of Action 2021.
  - Finland is working on securing funding for the Africa outreach activities and planning will take place in January.
- SU will work to reshape the agenda for FotC calls next year accordingly.

### Program of Action 2020

- Diplomatic Coordination:
  - Draft Guidelines for Leading Diplomatic Networks
    - Following input from Members, SU revised the guidelines.
    - Finland is developing a timeline for diplomatic coordination processes and opportunities.
  - Capital level coordination - SU raised awareness on:

- Global initiatives addressing the backsliding in Internet freedoms, as raised at the Joint FOC/FOC-AN Roundtable in November
  - New US administration's proposal to hold a democracy summit in 2021
  - US noted that more updates will be available later next year and encouraged Members to highlight the importance of the FOC in their bilateral conversations with the US.
- Opportunity to provide input into UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression Irene Khan's report on disinformation
  - SU proposed to submit the FOC Joint Statement on Spread of Disinformation Online on behalf of the FOC as official input.
  - SU noted that this would not require additional coordination.
- Local networks
  - Geneva, Paris, New York, Vienna: n/a
  - SU provided an update on the San Francisco/Silicon Valley initiative:
    - The goal is to bring FOC Members in San Francisco, Los Angeles and the US East Coast together to connect with the private sector through face-to-face meetings in 2021.
    - On 2 December, Austria and Finland held an informal call to discuss the initiative and the minutes were circulated to the FOC after.
    - The nature of the initiative is still unclear.
      - The [Stockholm Terms of Reference](#) (ToR) allow for setting up sub-entities, e.g. working groups, either multistakeholder or not.
      - A Task Force is a type of sub-entity.
    - Switzerland offered the support of the Swiss Consulate General in San Francisco.
    - Members highlighted the importance of a coordinated approach and concrete tangible outputs when reaching out to the private sector.
      - US proposed that Members prepare a list of potential outputs.
    - Switzerland proposed exploring engagement via OHCHR's B-Tech Project.

**Action>>** SU to circulate the revised draft Guidelines for Leading Diplomatic Networks to FOC Members for review until **COB Tuesday 12 January**.

**Action>>** Provided there are no objections by **COB Tuesday 12 January**, SU to send the FOC Joint Statement on Spread of Disinformation Online on behalf of the FOC as official input to the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression Irene Khan's report on disinformation.

**Action>>** San Francisco/Silicon Valley initiative leads to work on identifying the nature of the initiative and to present to the FotC.

- Shaping Global Norms:
  - Task Force on AI and Human Rights:
    - Canada is holding bilateral calls with Members and external consultees to discuss T-FAIR's work in 2021, and will circulate a roadmap for 2021.
    - In 2021, T-FAIR plans to focus on:
      - Internal work, e.g. monthly meetings and learning calls.
      - Supporting implementation of the Joint Statement through targeted workshops and having FOC Members lead on the calls to action.
      - Leveraging the Joint Statement's language through:

- Global processes and events, such as UN Human Rights Council, UN General Assembly, RightsCon and AI for Global Good
- Feeding into FOC's Ministerial-level event and the FO Conference
- Working with the Vatican on the Rome Call for AI Ethics
- Task Force on Digital Equality:
  - The call for participation is open.
  - Members are encouraged to identify a suitable date for a first call. *[The date has since been set on Monday, 18 January.]*
  - Members are encouraged to join the initiative.
  - The Task Force is envisioning a session at RightsCon.
- Joint Statement on Disinformation
  - Finland, UK and SU are planning a launch event.
  - Potential speakers include global South representatives and Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression
- FOC Stock language on privacy
  - Canada is to share a document in January.

#### **Advisory Network (AN)**

- AN held their monthly call on Wednesday, 16 December.
- AN is developing two pieces of proactive advice:
  - Around identifying priority areas to inform AN's and FOC's work in 2021, as noted at the Joint FOC/FOC-AN Roundtable in November.
    - To be submitted in January 2021.
  - Around the UN resolution "Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes".
    - To be submitted in December. *[The proactive advice reached consensus and was submitted to the FOC on Thursday, 17 December.]*

#### **FOC Membership**

- Updates on FOC Member engagement
  - Update on FOC Chairship 2022 - Germany, Finland, US and Netherlands reached out to Members to invite them to join the FotC group.
    - New Zealand is exploring the possibility of joining the Friends in 2022.
    - Germany highlighted the time zones issue and proposed to either alternate timings or invite representatives from Geneva/New York.
    - Mexico, Australia and Argentina are considering the request.
    - Japan is not in a position to join the FotC this year.
    - Members to delay the public announcement of the new FotC group in January to allow time for all contacted governments to respond.
- Updates on enlargement of FOC membership: n/a

#### **AOB**