

## **Minutes of the FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting**

Wednesday, 31 March 2021

14:30 - 15:15 UTC

**Attending:** Finland (FOC Chair), Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (UK), United States (US); Support Unit [SU]

### **1. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

- SU welcomed the Members to the first Strategy and Coordination (SCM) meeting in 2021.
- Finland, FOC Chair 2021, provided opening remarks and highlighted FOC's 10th anniversary as an opportunity to reiterate commitments and look to the future of the Internet freedom agenda. Finland outlined the key priorities for the Chairship:
  - Strengthening engagement with governments worldwide, non-governmental stakeholders and cooperation with global and regional organisations, especially in the global South;
  - More timely and continuous local diplomatic coordination;
  - Advancing FOC's agenda on priority issues – digital inclusion, cybersecurity, disinformation, artificial intelligence, challenges by authoritarian regimes;
  - Marking the 10-year anniversary of the FOC.

### **2. Housekeeping**

- SU updated Members on:
  - Internal Program of Action
    - Developing a communications strategy for the Coalition; and liaising with website developers on the revamp of the FOC website to be finalised by June.
  - FOC finances
  - FOC Membership
    - FOC Chairship 2022
      - Canada has been officially confirmed as the FOC Chair for 2022.
      - Canada, a founding Member of the Coalition, noted its acceptance of the Chairship, and commended Finland for its leadership of the FOC in 2021.

### **3. Progress update on the Program of Action 2021**

- 10th Anniversary of the FOC
  - Political Declaration
    - Finland introduced the Political Declaration Concept note and noted it will be requesting Members' feedback in the drafting process – the Declaration is set to examine central factors affecting the Internet freedom agenda in the 2020s, and reiterate the shared values of the FOC.
  - High-level ministerial meeting
    - Finland noted plans to organise the ministerial in-person meeting during the United Nations General Assembly in September with high-level representatives.
    - Should there be COVID-19 complications, plan B is to hold the meeting on the margins of the Freedom Online (FO) Conference in Helsinki in December.
  - FOC Visibility
    - Finland has begun work on a visibility campaign, including a communications strategy, to raise awareness and showcase FOC's work around priority themes.

- Diplomatic Coordination
  - Geneva
    - Finland held a virtual kick-off meeting with the Geneva diplomatic network to raise awareness of the FOC and its priorities and facilitate discussions on leveraging the FOC in international fora.
      - 19 Members attended.
    - Next steps include:
      - Establishing a distribution list for the Members, including experts in relevant fields.
      - Hosting virtual events on AI (early summer) and digital inclusion (September).
  - Paris
    - Canada and Finland held a virtual kick-off meeting with the Paris diplomatic network, in collaboration with the UNESCO Secretariat, which featured discussions on topics of alignment between the network and the FOC, including AI, digital inclusion, transparency of tech companies, and media freedom.
    - Canada noted it is working with the Paris diplomatic network to identify concrete next steps.
  - New York
    - US will be taking the lead in New York and working with Finland to reactivate the network, including hosting a kick-off event.
    - US highlighted the possibility of holding side-events ahead of relevant discussions that the FOC aims to influence.
- Advancing Priority Issues
  - Disinformation
    - UK highlighted the virtual launch of the [Joint Statement on Spread of Disinformation](#) held in February.
    - Next steps include leveraging language in relevant fora, e.g. RightsCon, and identifying opportunities to engage with the global South.
    - UK emphasised the need to continue building awareness and promoting the language from the Joint Statement on Disinformation.
  - Artificial Intelligence
    - Canada provided an update on the work of the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (T-FAIR).
      - T-FAIR held learning calls on Gender and AI, and AI ethics in March, and will be hosting a learning call on privacy in April.
      - With the forthcoming Resolution on new and emerging technologies at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), Canada is coordinating with Finland to host a T-FAIR event on the margins of the HRC in July.
      - Canada highlighted the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) launched its [Multistakeholder Questionnaire](#) open to institutional representatives, and that it is looking for opportunities to leverage the language of the [Joint Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights](#).
      - Canada noted its participation in the upcoming UNESCO virtual meetings on the [Recommendations on the Ethics of AI](#) taking place on 26-30 April.
  - Digital Inclusion

- SU provided an update on the establishment of the Task Force on Digital Equality led by Germany and Ghana.
    - The Task Force has circulated its Terms of Reference with the FOC.
      - Provided there are no objections or additional comments by COB Wednesday, 31 March, the ToR will be approved. *[This has since been completed.]*
- Stock Language on Privacy
  - Canada noted it is currently finalising the document after receiving feedback from the Coalition.

**Action>>** Canada and SU to circulate the revised *Stock Language on Privacy* document.

- Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach
  - Advisory Network (AN)
    - The AN has submitted three pieces of proactive advice:
      - AN Proactive Advice on the UN Cybercrime resolution;
      - AN Proactive Advice on Priorities for 2021 and Beyond;
      - AN Proactive Advice on the Situation Regarding Digital Rights in Myanmar.
    - The AN has also actively participated in the work of the FOC via T-FAIR ,the Task Force on Digital Equality, the Silicon Valley Working group, and in events such as the Joint Statement on Disinformation launch.
    - SU noted the Joint FOC and FOC-AN Roundtable is taking place on Thursday, 8 April.
  - Africa Outreach Project
    - Initiated by Finland in coordination with African Members, the FOC is in the process of organising three high-level events in Kenya, Tunisia and Ghana, and an outreach event in Ethiopia in the second quarter of 2021 to raise the visibility and engagement of the Coalition in Africa.
  - Silicon Valley Working Group
    - SU provided an update on the establishment of the Silicon Valley Working Group, led by Austria and Finland.
      - The group has circulated a Concept Note with the FOC.
        - Provided there are no objections or additional comments by COB Wednesday, 31 March, the Concept Note will be approved. *[This has since been completed.]*
- Upcoming FOC Activities
  - Internal FOC meetings
    - The Joint FOC/Advisory Network Roundtable is taking place on Thursday, 8 April at 15:00 UTC.
    - The Silicon Valley Working Group monthly call is taking place on Wednesday, 14 April.
    - The next Friends of the Chair Call will take place on Wednesday, 28 April.
    - The Task Force on AI and Human Rights (T-FAIR) will hold their monthly call on Thursday, 29 April.
    - The next Advisory Network and Task Force on Digital Equality monthly calls will be confirmed later in April.
    - The next SCM is envisioned to take place at the end of June.
  - External events
    - The virtual Stockholm Internet Forum will take place on 10-12 May.

- The FOC will hold a session on disinformation, AI and digital inclusion. More updates will be shared shortly.
- RightsCon will take place on 7-11 June. The FOC intends to host sessions on freedom online in the 2020s (Finland), AI and surveillance (Canada and the UK), and digital equality (Germany and Ghana).

**Action>>** SU to include internal FOC meetings and events in the Global Internet Freedom Calendar.