



FREEDOM ONLINE COALITION MEETINGS

Margins of RightsCon; Toronto, Canada

Tuesday 15 May 2018

FOC Attendance: Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Sweden, The Netherlands, UK, US; Chaired by the FOC Support Unit (SU)

Minutes

Digital Defenders Partnership (DDP) Briefing

- Ms Jantine van Herwijnen gave an update to FOC members on the work of the DDP:
 - DDP was initiated in 2012 to provide emergency support for bloggers/independent media/activists/human rights defenders and build capacity of emergency responders.
 - DDP activities include emergency support, fellowships, rapid responders networks, and linking and learning.
 - In 2017, through 18 emergency grants, DDP supported nearly 3000 individuals and 218 organisations; it also supported 7 fellows across different regions and organised 3 events on emergency response.
 - DDP had received more requests than they are able to meet in the last year.
 - DDP will be extending their work and emergency support to Latin America, Central Asia and hope to engage further in Africa.
 - The Rapid Responders program had reached underrepresented groups through the network and received €1.17m in grants.
- A DDP section in the FOC newsletter was proposed.
- The Netherlands and Estonia noted the value of hearing stories on the ground and suggested holding a DDP meeting at the Annual Conference in Berlin. The Netherlands invited further engagement from FOC members with the work of the DDP.
- It was proposed that FOC members and the FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) assist with raising and circulating profiles of human rights defenders, urgent news, and trends to diplomatic networks and embassies, and provide intel and advice, as and when appropriate.

Action >> SU to explore ways to feature DDP activities and updates in the FOC Newsletter

Action >> Germany to consider ways to integrate and feature work of DDP at the Annual Conference

Housekeeping

- SU ran through the schedule of FOC activities at RightsCon and encouraged FOC members to engage with FOC-AN during the first face-to-face meeting.

Update on Chairmanship Programme

Annual Conference

- Ambassador Fitschen, representing the German Chair, gave an update on the planning of the FO Conference to be held in Berlin, 28-30 November at the German Federal Foreign Office.
 - Conference to accommodate 400+ participants, including 45-50 governments.
 - First draft of concept note was shared with Friends of the Chair for input; it follows the FOC Program of Action, with a number of themes proposed. Germany to coordinate development of the program with the input of FOC members and the FOC-AN.

- Finland highlighted the importance of ensuring stronger involvement from groups from the Global South and Asia and mainstreaming gender.
 - FOC members discussed further discussion topics, including artificial intelligence and Blockchain.
 - The UK noted that numerous sessions could be grouped under themes.
- A booklet with core FOC documents will be distributed at the conference.

Implementation of the San Jose Work Plan (SJWP)

- SU updated members on overall progress on implementing the SJWP.
 - See Annex 1 below for details
- SU gave an update on the Evaluation Framework for Member Review and Termination (EF) .
 - The final draft of the EF is currently being developed based on members' comments.
 - The Netherlands proposed further clarifying process of triggering Member review.
- Canada and Germany provided an update on the Advisory Network:
 - Canada is acting as FOC-AN Liaison, to assist Germany with responsibilities.
 - Protocol for developing FOC joint statements with AN input has been developed and will be used to develop the statement on shrinking civil society space.
- SU provided an update on finance.
 - Sweden has contributed to the 2018 budget, and the contribution from Germany is being finalised.
 - Members were encouraged to look into contributing to FOC budget in 2019.

Program of Action 2018

- Germany updated members on Program of Action 2018:
 - Objective 1: To promote global norms that seek to prevent and limit state-sponsored restrictions to human rights online
 - The [Joint Statement on Internet Censorship](#) had been issued by the FOC. Statement to be leveraged through the Human Rights Council in June, the FOC-AN and at the Annual Conference.
 - The statement on Shrinking Spaces had been started by Canada.
 - FOC members were encouraged to make use of the statements for bilaterals.
 - Objective 2: To support civil society voices online
 - Digital Divides statement would be promoted at UNESCO, Paris.
 - Objective 3: To promote and protect human rights online in the context of cybersecurity
 - The statement on Cybersecurity Laws to be led by the UK;
 - The Netherlands flagged that the Dutch MFA had allocated funds to continue to work of Working Group 1 to continue promoting a human rights based approach to cybersecurity.

Diplomatic Networks

- Germany updated members on the activities of FOC local Diplomatic Networks.
- Canada noted that they will be presenting a resolution at the Human Rights Council on Violence against Women and Girls, including online violence.
- The US proposed the creation of a platform through which the FOC could confidentially share information on diplomatic activities.

Action >> SU to look into a platform to facilitate sharing of diplomatic activities.

Outreach

- Germany noted the need for greater outreach in the global South.

- Germany invited members to consider taking on FOC Chairmanship role in 2019.

Internet Freedom Trends and Developments

- Members were invited to share country priorities and Internet freedom policy developments.
 - The Netherlands noted that the Internet freedom agenda remains a Dutch policy priority and efforts are being made to streamline Internet freedom and digital security across its various human rights programmes; further highlighted were activities within the government which relate to FOC priorities, including the incorporation of human rights online in the Dutch National Cybersecurity Agenda and the development of resources for Dutch embassies to use to protect activists online.
 - The US highlighted concern with Internet censorship around the world and noted concern with foreign interference in electoral processes which is currently being discussed within the G7.
 - The UK noted the development of a green paper on Internet Safety Strategy and the question of content regulation and counter-terrorism.
 - Canada raised the issue of automated systems and accountability. Canada additionally raised the potential for the FOC to highlight the positives of online space.
 - Austria noted the trend of companies moving away from the self-regulation mantra in recent months, and the need for governments to engage with tech spaces.
 - The US proposed the FOC engaging in joint demarches for concerning country-specific situations.

AOB

- The next Strategy and Coordination Meeting will be held on the 28 November, Day 0 of the Annual Conference.
- An FOC meeting may also take place during IGF 2018 (dates TBD).