FREEDOM ONLINE COALITION

FOC Strategy & Coordination Meeting
18 - 20 October
FOC Expo
20 October
Rome, Italy

75 ITALIA CANADA

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Session Summaries

Day 0 - Tuesday, 18 October

Friends of the Chair monthly meeting #8 (October) | 13:00 – 14:30 CEST

Participants: Chair, Friends of the Chair, Italy; Support Unit (SU)
Format: Hybrid

The FOC Friends of the Chair (FotC) October monthly meeting took place as a hybrid session hosted at the residence of the British Ambassador to Italy in Rome. As the host of the FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM), Italy joined the Housekeeping portion of the FotC meeting. The meeting allowed FotC Members to focus on discussions around key priorities for the FOC. Canada noted that negotiations of the first draft of the Ottawa Agenda would take place on Day 1 of the SCM in a multistakeholder setting. Canada also noted that the amendments on Observer status language from the Stockholm Terms of Reference (ToR) would be going to the full FOC for a 15-day silence procedure. US provided an update on the status of the [Joint Statement on Internet Shutdowns in Iran](). US also invited Members to discuss the Proposed Guiding Principles on Government Use of Surveillance Technologies and Subsequent Data Generation, Management, and Use, that would lay out how governments use surveillance technology. US led a discussion on the 2023 Program of Action (PoA), and outlined the key thematic areas and goals.

Action>> FOC Members are invited to express interest in serving on the Friends of the Chair by Friday, 4 November by emailing the SU.

Action >> Members are invited to provide feedback to the first draft of the Ottawa Agenda by Wednesday, 26 October to Canada , with a CC to the SU.

Action>> Friends of the Chair are invited to provide feedback in writing on the Proposed Guiding Principles on Government Use of Surveillance Technologies and Subsequent Data Generation, Management, and Use to the US by Friday, November 11 by emailing the US with a CC to the SU.

Action>> Friends of the Chair are invited to provide written feedback on the 2023 PoA by Monday, 31 October emailing the US and the SU.

[Please note that all of the deadlines above have passed.]

Day 1 - Wednesday, 19 October

Cluster One: Affirming And Shaping Global Norms | 9:00 –11:30 AM CEST

Participants: FOC/ SU
Format: Hybrid

Cluster One served as an opportunity for FOC Members to discuss diplomatic coordination in 2022, highlighting areas for future FOC engagement and providing an overview of the successes and challenges of the diplomatic networks, with particular focus on the work of the Geneva network. Canada led an end-year review discussion focused on FOC's work in 2022, demonstrating the progress made in relation to activities outlined in the Program of Action (PoA) 2022. FOC Members also discussed opportunities for coordination and involvement in events and fora that the Coalition can engage in until the end of the year and during the 2023 US Chairship. The US provided an update about the status of the [Joint Statement on Internet Shutdowns in Iran](). Finally, the session further included updates regarding the Friends of the Chair and Task Force/Working Group 2023 mandates, inviting FOC Members to consider joining the former, and noting that the latter are up for renewal by the Friends of the Chair.

Action>> FOC Members are invited to express interest in serving on the Friends of the Chair by Friday, 4 November by emailing the SU. *[Please note that the deadline has already passed.]*

Action>> FOC Members are invited to express interest in leading a Task Force or Working Group by Friday, 25 November.

Action>> FOC Members are invited to amplify the [Joint Statement on Internet Shutdowns in Iran]() on social media.

Cluster Two: Promoting Multi-Stakeholder Engagement | 11:45 – 12:30 CEST

Participants: FOC/ FOC-AN/ SU
Format: Hybrid

The Cluster began with Canada, FOC 2022 Chair, reflecting on the key accomplishments of their Chairship, as well as the completion of the [six regional consultation reports]() that informed the development of the Ottawa Agenda, and sought to provide the Coalition with a greater sense of direction for the future. Next, the US provided an overview of the thematic areas and goals of the PoA 2023, and emphasized their plans to strengthen FOC's diplomatic networks. The US also introduced a potential donor coordination mechanism that seeks to bring together policy and development programming, and would offer the opportunity to increase engagement with local stakeholders.

Cluster Two: Promoting Multi-Stakeholder Engagement (Cont.) | 13:30 – 15:30 CEST

Participants: FOC/ FOC-AN/ SU

Format: Hybrid

FOC and FOC-AN Members discussed the first draft of the Ottawa Agenda, which will aim to update the Tallinn Agenda, adopted by the FOC in 2014, with a new set of recommendations for freedom online. In this session, Canada shared key takeaways from the regional consultation reports and highlighted the unique challenges and threats to human rights online from each of the six regions including disinformation, Internet shutdowns, fragmentation, and digital literacy among others. In-person and remote participants convened in breakout groups to discuss the Ottawa Agenda and provide feedback on how to strengthen the document.

Flash Session on Democracy and Tech Initiatives | 15:45 – 16:30 CEST

Participants: FOC/ FOC-AN/ SU

Format: In-person

Hosted by the FOC-AN with speakers from Denmark, the US, the UK, Canada, and Latvia, the session provided FOC and FOC-AN Members an opportunity to take stock of emerging and existing democracy and technology initiatives, with lead countries sharing updates on the progress and outputs of their initiatives including Denmark's Tech for Democracy, the US' Summit for Democracy, the UK's S4D Tech for Democracy cohort, and Canada-Latvia's Democracy and Tech Initiative. The speakers noted overlap with the FOC's work and the need to exchange knowledge.

Cluster Three: Raising the FOC's Profile | 17:00 – 18:00 CEST

Participants: FOC/ FOC-AN/ SU

Format: Hybrid

The session provided the opportunity to review the FOC's efforts to raise the Coalition's profile in 2022 and discuss ways to further strengthen these going forward. Participants noted that greater coordination efforts between FOC Members and the FOC-AN are a way to raise the FOC's profile and ensure that there are no missed opportunities for engagement. Improving the understanding of the FOC among Ministries on the domestic level was highlighted as an area of opportunity to ensure that the value of the FOC is effectively communicated. Improving communications capacity to amplify FOC outputs and activities was also discussed as a yet-untapped opportunity to raise the brand of the FOC.

Day 2 - Thursday, 20 October

Internet Freedom For All: Making The Internet Freedom Agenda More Inclusive
Workshop | 10:30 – 12:00 CEST

Participants: FOC/ FOC-AN/ Invited Participants/ SU
Format: Hybrid

The workshop, organised by Global Partners Digital and the International Development Research Center, with support from Global Affairs Canada, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, and the FOC's Task Force on Digital Equality, aimed to raise awareness of the value of global South stakeholders in advancing freedoms online, explore how stakeholder engagement can make global processes more inclusive, identify opportunities for engagement in FOC processes, and explore the value of such engagement for global South stakeholders. Participants reflected on FOC's work to advance digital inclusion and discussed limitations to meaningful engagement with the global South, such as the need to understand that disinformation and hate speech are sometimes observed through a global North lens, to encourage a more global South perspective, and to acknowledge global South regions as co-creators of a free digital space. Speakers recommended focusing on building bridges between digital and non-digital rights groups, amplifying global South voices in international fora and increasing collaboration with social entrepreneurs, while ensuring that the private sector is aligned with human rights principles.

Freedom Online Coalition Expo | 13:15 -17:45 CEST

Participants: FOC/ FOC-AN/ Invited Participants/ SU
Format: Hybrid

Opening Remarks | 13:15 - 13:30 CEST

Deputy Director General for Political & Security Affairs of Italy, Luca Franchetti Pardo, opened the FOC Expo by commendeding Canada on their work as FOC Chair in 2022 and highlighting their commitment to the goals and activities of the FOC. Italy emphasised the importance of coordinated and multistakeholder action to maintain and promote a healthy model of democracy, and highlighted the trends toward authoritarianism, and the importance of protecting human rights online and offline, with particular mention of the situations in Iran and Ukraine. The Canadian Ambassador to Italy, Elissa Goldberg, welcomed Expo participants, noting that one of the most pressing challenges is how to benefit from digital technology in ways that protect and promote human rights, in line with democratic values. Canada highlighted the successes of their Chairship and noted that one of the goals of the Expo is to create multistakeholder and multilateral opportunities for cooperation amongst participants.

Session 1: The State of Internet Freedom in 2022 and Beyond | 13:45 - 14:30 CEST

The session, led by the Coalition's Advisory Network (FOC-AN), highlighted the growing fragmentation of the Internet as a key challenge to be addressed globally, noting that fragmentation at the national level reflects a geopolitical battle to control the Internet as countries seek to change Internet governance norms. The discussion further highlighted the growing number of regulatory frameworks that target and impact the technical layer of the Internet, directly impacting efforts to ensure a free, open, and interoperable Internet. Speakers recommended a more nuanced approach to address challenges, noting that governments are now paying greater attention to the ways that information control is being carried out, beyond Internet shutdowns and fragmentation. The session emphasised

positive trends in cybersecurity and regulation, attributing them to increased attention to Internet freedom issues by technology platforms, government resourcing, and ongoing efforts by civil society.

Session 2: Gendered Disinformation as a Challenge for Digital Inclusion | 14:30 - 15:30 CEST

Ghana, as co-Chair of the FOC's Task Force on Digital Equality (TFDE), opened the session by noting the FOC's call on governments to refrain from conducting and sponsoring disinformation campaigns from the FOC Joint Statement on Spread of Disinformation Online, and urged all stakeholders to take active steps to address the issues of disinformation in a manner that respects human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The session, which included representatives from the Global Partnership on Gender Based Online Harassment and Abuse, highlighted the role of digital spaces as locations of opportunity and abuse for marginalised groups, and emphasised the presence of gendered disinformation as an indicator of the erosion of democratic institutions and the backsliding of women's rights. Recommendations for the FOC included: understanding gendered disinformation as a threat to democracy and recognising freedom from violence on digital platforms as a fundamental right; designing and implementing a holistic strategy that takes a preventative and evidence-based approach; and applying substantial modifications in international and national legal frameworks. Panellists noted the role of social media companies in online gender-based violence, and suggested countries put in place regulations to address this.

Session 3: Featured Topic: Internet Shutdowns | 16:00 - 17:00 CEST

The co-Chairs of the FOC's Task Force on Internet Shutdowns (TFIS) provided insights around the issue of Internet shutdowns and the work of TFIS in 2022. They provided background on the current state of jurisprudence around Internet shutdowns, noting that while there have been international resolutions in support of protecting human rights online, there seems to be less understanding around this and gaps that allow for Internet shutdowns to occur. Panellists highlighted the impact of Internet shutdowns in furthering the trend of growing Internet fragmentation. It was recommended that TFIS directly engage with the private sector and telecommunications companies to provide guidelines about ways to respond to a request to shut down services. When considering future trends to look out for, panellists suggested that platform blocking be regarded as an area of concern.

Session 4: Featured Topic: Private Sector Collaboration | 17:00 - 17:20 CEST

Canada, as Chair of FOC's Silicon Valley Working Group (SV WG), highlighted FOC's efforts to promote cooperation with the global technology sector. The Working Group has focused on raising awareness of FOC's work, and on building technical capacity among FOC Members' representatives in Silicon Valley to better understand the different ways in which government tools can be used more effectively. The SV WG's work has also focused on building new forms of cooperation with the global technology sector, inviting companies, such as Tik Tok, CloudFlare, and Discord among others, to discuss the topic of 'trust and security'.

Session 5: Featured Topic: Artificial Intelligence | 17:20 - 17:40 CEST

Germany, in its capacity as Chair of the Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (TF-AIR), led the session by emphasising the need to advocate for a human-centred approach to artificial intelligence. It focused on TF-AIR's contribution to FOC outputs and activities in 2022, including a series of monthly meetings and learning calls, attended by experts from civil society organisations, academia and the private sector to discuss the design, monitoring, adjustment, and regulation of algorithms.

Annex I: Agenda (abridged)

FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR MEETING
Time: 12:30 – 4:30 PM CEST
Participants: Friends of the Chair
Format: In-person

WELCOME REMARKS, BREAKFAST & A YEAR-IN REVIEW
Time: 9:00 – 9:30 AM CEST | 7:00 – 7:30 AM UTC
Participants: FOC
Format: In-person
Leads: Canada, Italy, SU

CLUSTER ONE: AFFIRMING AND SHAPING GLOBAL NORMS
Time: 9:30 – 11:30 AM CEST | 7:30 – 9:30 AM UTC
Participants: FOC
Format: In-person
Leads: Canada, US, Paris and Geneva Diplomatic Networks

CLUSTER TWO: PROMOTING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
Time: 11:45 AM – 3:30 PM CEST | 9:45 AM – 1:30 PM UTC
Participants: FOC / FOC-AN
Format: Hybrid
Leads: Canada, the US, SU

FLASH SESSION ON DEMOCRACY AND TECH INITIATIVES
Time: 3:45 – 4:30 PM CEST 1:45– 2:30 PM UTC
Participants: FOC / FOC-AN
Format: In-person
Lead: AN

CLUSTER THREE: RAISING THE FOC'S PROFILE
Time: 5:00 – 6:00 PM CEST | 3:00 – 4:00 PM UTC
Participants: FOC / FOC-AN
Format: Hybrid
Leads: Canada, SU, US

INTERNET FREEDOM FOR ALL: MAKING THE INTERNET FREEDOM AGENDA MORE INCLUSIVE WORKSHOP
Time: 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM CEST | 8:30 - 10:00 AM UTC
Participants: FOC / FOC-AN / Invited Participants
Format: Hybrid
Lead: Global Partners Digital

FREEDOM ONLINE COALITION EXPO
Time: 1:15 - 5:45 PM CEST | 11:15 AM - 3:45 PM UTC
Participants: FOC, FOC-AN, Invited Participants
Format: Hybrid
Leads: Canada, Italy, FOC sub-entities, SU