Friends of the Chair Meeting #4
Wednesday, 26 April 2023

Attended: US (Chair 2023), Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ghana, Netherlands, Switzerland, and UK; Support Unit (SU)

<u>Housekeeping</u>

Updates from the SU
- FOC Membership and Observership
  - Support Unit (SU) noted Iceland is now the 37th member of the FOC.
- Upcoming Deadlines
  - 26 April: Deadline for FotC to submit comments to the Task Force on Trustworthy Information Online (TFTIO) concept note. is Wednesday, 26 April. *[Please note this deadline has passed.]*
  - 28 April: Deadline to express interest to join the Funding Coordination Group (FCG). *[Please note this deadline has passed.]*
  - 28 April: Deadline to register for a visa to attend RightsCon. *[Please note this deadline has passed.]*;
    - 3 May: Deadline to [register](#) for the FOC SCM.
    - SU noted a recently circulated [email with details](#) about registering for RightsCon and the Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM), which also includes information about applying for visas. (Please note that in-person participants need to register for RightsCon to attend the SCM; a code has been provided for discounted registration.)
      - It was noted that 7 FOC and 19 Advisory Network (FOC-AN) Members have registered to attend in-person.
  - 19 May: Deadline to submit session proposals for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).
    - FOC plans to host an open forum.
- Upcoming events
  - 5 June: Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM) in San Jose, Costa Rica, on the margins of RightsCon.
  - 5 - 8 June: RightsCon
    - SU noted the FOC will be hosting the following sessions:
      - "Strategies to limit the use of AI-driven technologies for repressive and authoritarian purposes", an online session by TFAIR;
      - "Anticipate & Answer: Addressing Internet disruption through the FOC's Task Force on Internet Shutdowns (TFIS)", a closed, in-person session by TFIS;
      - "Promoting a Positive Vision for the Internet and Digital Technologies through the Freedom Online Coalition" hosted by the US, format TBC.
  - Beginning of May: The New York diplomatic network will be holding its first meeting, with a focus on the Global Digital Compact (GDC) process.
    - Invitations for the meeting will be sent to the FOC members' missions.
  - End of May: The Geneva diplomatic network will be holding a learning call on AI and a working-level meeting around HRC53.
    - Invitations will be sent to the FOC members' missions.
- Comms
  - SU noted the [Digital Hub](#) is now accessible to all capital points of contact, with the diplomatic networks and the FOC-AN to gain access shortly.
    - If FotC Members have any issues accessing the Digital Hub, please reach out to the SU.

- ○ A brief demonstration about how to use the digital hub was provided by the SU, highlighting plans to roll out a language mapping tool that would aid members in navigating FOC agreed-upon language for various processes and submissions.
- Task Forces and Working Group
  - ○ SU noted that all Task Forces and Working Group are holding their regular monthly meetings, and currently liaising with the US, Chair 2023, on the facilitation of FOC RightsCon sessions.
    - ■ SVWG have begun discussing potentially holding a side-event on the margins of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in November; more information will be shared once available.

Action>> Friends of the Chair to register for the June Strategy and Coordination Meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica by **COB Wednesday, 3 May**. *[Please note the deadline has been extended to **COB Friday, 12 May**]*

<u>**Discussion Items**</u>

<u>**Revision of the Stockholm Terms of Reference**</u>
- SU provided an overview of the Stockholm Terms of Reference (ToR) update and revision process.
  - ○ FotC consultations to revise the ToR are open to all FotC Members and held every two weeks. Members are encouraged to join these meetings to ease coordination efforts around the ToR revisions.
  - ○ The second ToR revision consultation will take place on Thursday, 27 April. *[Please note this meeting has passed.]*
    - ■ SU noted the consultation would serve as a sense-check during consolidation of received comments from the FotC and the FOC-AN, with the US to take the FotC through the text section-by-section.
    - ■ All relevant information regarding the process to revise the ToR, as well as all relevant documents are available on the FOC Digital Hub on the ToR page.
  - ○ SU noted that once the FotC reach consensus, a first draft of the revised ToR will be shared with the broader Coalition for review and further deliberation ahead of the June SCM, with the aim to finalise the process in the fall of 2023.
- US noted they have received comments from Germany, Finland, and the UK, and flagged that they would be following up with those Members to clarify their input.
  - ○ US noted the next step is to consolidate comments following the consultation, and send the next draft to the FotC for red-line edits.

<u>**Draft agenda for the upcoming SCM in Costa Rica**</u>
- US noted plans to hold a FotC meeting on the afternoon of Sunday, 4 June at 17:00 - 18:00 local time (TBC), and asked Members whether they will arrive in time for an early evening meeting, followed by an informal dinner.
  - ○ Denmark and the UK noted they will be able to attend, and Switzerland noted they will be arriving Sunday evening.
  - ○ US noted that if a formal FotC meeting is not feasible, they would still like to have an informal dinner Sunday evening.
- US provided a run through of the draft SCM agenda, noting:
  - ○ A significant portion of the FOC Member-only meeting on Day 1 will focus on the ToR revisions and updates;
  - ○ More coffee breaks have been built in to allow for networking opportunities and sidebar discussions;

- ○ The FOC-AN will be leading a learning session, which could be an opportunity to help the FOC identify three to five topics to focus on in the coming years.
  - ○ The Joint FOC / FOC-AN Roundtable will continue the conversation around engagement with supranational and regional organisations (SnRO), as well as discuss FOC-AN input on what an FOC rapid response mechanism could look like (Activity 3 under Goal 1, Objective 1B outlined in the PoA 2023).
  - ○ The SCM will end at 15:30 local time, allowing Coalition Members to attend the RightsCon opening Ceremony at 16:00.
- ● SU noted the draft agenda would be shared with the full FOC and FOC-AN following the April FotC monthly call.
  - ○ Denmark referenced conversations at the March SCM around developing a blueprint for how to engage with SnRO based on a pilot project with one specific organisation, e.g. the European Union (EU).
  - ○ US responded that this will potentially be a way to move the discussion forward.
  - ○ US highlighted the need to have an FOC Member liaise with and act as the bridge between the regional organisation and the FOC.

Action>> Friends to share their arrival date and time in Costa Rica with the Support Unit by **COB Tuesday, 9 May**.

Task Force on Trustworthy Information Online (TFTIO)
- ● Denmark provided background information on the TFTIO, which will be co-Chaired by Denmark and Wikimedia Foundation, highlighting that its first iteration was as the Tech for Democracy (T4D) Action Coalition on Trustworthy Information Online.
  - ○ It was noted the Action Coalition looked to address issues of misinformation and disinformation online, with a strong focus on promoting community-based models of information sharing.
  - ○ Denmark noted the goal of the Task Force would be to develop policy recommendations for a "healthier, global information ecosystem", and that it would consist of external partners including Witness, Global Voices, and Salesforce.
- ● SU noted that the next step is to have FotC members sign-off on establishing TFTIO.
  - ○ Comments to the concept note were provided by the Netherlands via email, which included:
    - ■ The Netherlands like the idea of the TFTIO, but are "worried about the many initiatives that are already in this space", and highlighting a number of related initiatives such as the Forum on Information and Democracy cohort. The Netherlands noted their work in collaboration with Canada and International IDEA to develop the Declaration on Information Integrity Online and flagged that they may reach out to the FOC after the first round of input from International IDEA member states.
    - ■ Denmark noted they are interested in further discussing with the Netherlands about where they see direct duplication of efforts.
      - ● It was further noted that to minimise duplication, Denmark is seeking to integrate the Action Coalition into the FOC since it has already been established externally under T4D.
    - ■ Denmark noted they would be open to integrating the Forum on Information and Democracy cohort however makes sense.
- ● Canada welcomed the initiative and noted they would like to connect trilaterally with Denmark and the Netherlands to discuss synergies around TFTIO and the Declaration on Information Integrity Online.

- US asked whether it is possible to have external stakeholders join FOC sub-entities.
  - SU confirmed it is possible, noting that it is up to the FotC to approve new sub-entities, while the structure is up to the group's leads.
    - It was noted that some FOC sub-entities currently have external stakeholders and consultees.

Action>> Denmark to connect with the Netherlands and Canada to clarify outstanding comments and discuss synergies regarding the Task Force on Trustworthy Information Online (TFTIO) initiative. Following trilateral discussions, Denmark to note to the Friends of the Chair any updates to the concept note, and ask for TFTIO mandate sign-off.

Program of Action 2023
- US provided updates on the Program of Action 2023.
  - Girls and ICT Day event organised by the US on Tuesday, 25 April for which more information will be shared soon.
  - Tentative plans for a side-event at HRC53 in June were noted, with the possibility of having a thematic focus on business and human rights.
  - US are working on developing an FOC rapid response mechanism and have asked the FOC-AN to provide input.
  - US are exploring the option of holding the FOC Ministerial Meeting in September in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
    - If the Ministerial Meeting goes ahead as planned, the autumn SCM will be rescheduled to November, with Switzerland to potentially host.
    - Demarche cables are set to go out to follow-up with all FOC Members and encourage them to consider chairing.