

1. Internet principles

High-level Internet principles can be useful to serve as an agreed, high-level guidance to identify the priorities, constraints and objectives of policy and operational activities related to the future of the Internet and of its governance. A process leading towards a more broadly supported and coherent set of principles for Internet governance would be helpful in finding common ground at the global level.

2. What is the current situation?

Following the conclusions of the 2002-2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), many came forward with various statements of principles on substantive and/or procedural elements of Internet policies and governance. In most cases, these statements were supported by a limited set of stakeholders or limited in geographical scope. Examples include the WSIS Tunis Agenda itself, the 2011 G8 Deauville Declaration, the 2011 OECD Principles on Internet Policy-making and the Internet COMPACT, proposed by the Commission in its Communication on Internet Policy and Governance of 12.2.2014.

3. European Commission's perspective

- A coherent set of principles should feed into the concrete roadmap for the further evolution of the Internet governance ecosystem, both from a procedural / institutional and from a substantive point of view.
- For over two years, the Commission has advocated an approach summarised by the COMPACT acronym: the Internet as a space of Civic responsibilities, One unfragmented resource governed via a Multistakeholder approach to Promote democracy and Human Rights, based on a sound technological Architecture that engenders Confidence and facilitates a Transparent governance both of the underlying Internet infrastructure and of the services which run on top of it.
- The Internet is an ecosystem in which every participant must take up its social responsibilities.
- The Internet should remain one single unfragmented space, where all resources should be accessible in the same manner, irrespective of the location of the user and the provider.
- Internet-related discussions and decisions should be based on a strengthened, genuine multi-stakeholder model; without prejudice to regulatory interventions that may be taken in view of identified public interest objectives such as the respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic values, as well as linguistic and cultural diversity and care for vulnerable persons.
- The Internet should be a space subject to the same laws and norms that apply in other areas of our day-to-day lives; and where individuals can benefit from their rights, and from judicial remedies when those rights are infringed.
- The technical architecture of the Internet should be able to evolve to cope with new and often unforeseen challenges.
- Confidence in the Internet and its governance is a prerequisite for the realisation of the Internet's potential as an engine for economic growth and innovation.
- Transparent, inclusive, balanced and accountable governance of the Internet (concerning both its infrastructure and the activities which take place on top of it) is paramount for the sustainability of the Internet as a single, unfragmented resource.
- The innovation power of the Internet must be maintained. This requires careful yet robust stewardship.