

## **High Level Group on Internet Governance meeting, 25 April 2012 - summary**

The HLG meeting was chaired by Acting Deputy Director General Megan Richards (MR) and was attended by 21 HLG Members (AT, BE, CY, CZ, DK, EE, EL, FR, FI, LT, LV, HU, NL, PT, SE, SI, SK, RO, UK, NO, CH).

### **1. Opening remarks - Discussion on the draft Work Programme**

M. Richards referred to the draft Work Programme of the HLG circulated to the Group. This constitutes part of the broader action to ensure better functioning of HLG. There was general support for the proposal and the Work Programme was agreed. NL questioned how the work programme fits the plans for improving HLG operation, if horizontal issues are also covered and how does the Commission position itself.

M. Richards stressed that Internet was international and not just European and highlighted the importance of Internet in the economy. To that aspect 12 Heads of State wrote to President Barroso and Van Rompuy stressing the importance of Internet for the Digital Single Market. President Barroso has also written to MS to consider appointing "digital champions" and several MS have already nominated such champions.

### **2. ICANN: follow-up of San Jose meeting**

DG INFSO (A. Glorioso) reported on the major issues that dominated the San Jose meeting mentioning that the overall feeling within the Commission is that there are several issues raising concern:

- The Conflict of Interest policy which the ICANN Board committed to deliver for March is not yet ready, and may be adopted only at the Prague meeting in June.
- The deadline for new gTLD applications was postponed, following the discovery of a "glitch" in the IT system developed by ICANN which may have allowed applicants to see confidential documents of other applicants.
- The US Government decided to cancel the first call for proposals for the IANA functions without providing explanations.

These issues call for stronger pressure on ICANN and the US Government (for what concerns the IANA contract) to be more effective and transparent.

SE mentioned that there was still no answer from ICANN to the questions put to the Board. In terms of planning, there were teleconference between GAC and ICANN and also a GAC teleconference for Prague agenda to be scheduled soon.

During the discussion, the following concerns were shared by many members: UK expressed in particular concern about the delay for the gTLD as the early warning period would now fall in July-August holiday period for all European administrations.

NO had strong views on the impression ICANN created, namely of an organisation that was not working and was collapsing. EL expressed concerns about .eu and the confusability issues. The Commission (A. Angelova-Krasteva) explained that the application for Cyrillic and Greek strings of dot.eu was an issue that it was very closely monitored. Furthermore, it was stressed that the COM has provided all necessary documents and information in support of the application and it was now up to ICANN to find a solution.

CH is also very worried about the gTLD issue, mentioning that if such a problem had risen within the ITU, it would have raised protests all over the world.

SE also endorsed comments from UK, NO and CH. DK and PT also expressed their concerns.

MR mentioned that European GAC members should engage with non-European GAC members to ensure there is commonality of views and especially try to take advantage of the momentum of the new CEO. MR also announced that the next meeting Nigel Hickson, now with ICANN, formerly UK, will be invited.

**Action: to provide Nigel Hickson, invited to attend the next meeting, with clear messages of the concerns raised during the meeting.**

### **3. CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the IGF**

Peter Major (HU) chair of the CSTD WG presented the draft report of the Working Group and was thanked by the Chair.

The Working Group on Improvements to the IGF was created under the umbrella of the UN (*Commission on Science and Technology for Development*) and established in open and inclusive manner. The CSTD WG prepared a draft report, which should be approved by the CSTD in May. The draft report does not propose a change in the current model of Internet Governance but certain improvements to ensure that IGF is more visible.

There were 5 main topics agreed in the report:

- Shaping the outcomes of IGF meetings
- Working modalities including open consultations, the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group and the Secretariat.
- Funding of the IGF.
- Broadening participation and capacity-building.
- Linking the IGF to other Internet governance-related entities.

FI was in favour of the report suggesting that it should be endorsed, being a true example of multi-stakeholder work reinforcing thus our credibility. Concerning enhanced cooperation, even though the initial idea was to discuss it within the working group, finally it was kept at bay. PT mentioned that the two last meetings were very difficult, stressing that the decoupling of enhanced cooperation was a strategy of G77 countries, to work on it in the May workshop.

CH stressed the hard discussions in CSTD, ECOSOC, May 18 workshop and HU mentioned that probably there would be another working group on enhanced cooperation.

UK expressed concerns about what would "more tangible output" mean, as it could be a hook for inserting decision-making into the IGF to which HU understanding was about better website, training material, etc.

#### **4. Enhanced cooperation**

The Workshop on Enhanced Cooperation will take place on 18 May 2012, just after the Open Consultations and MAG meeting in Geneva. UK drew also attention on WTPF 2013 as the informal group of experts preparing the report for WTPF will meet in June in Geneva. HU mentioned that IGF and enhanced cooperation are two separate processes, appreciating the Commission's rationale, suggesting we should elaborate proactive positions for Europe. For NL enhanced cooperation may well be the improvements of contacts between organisations, but it should also be a more balanced international legitimacy of regional and governmental involvement in Internet issues. Furthermore, NL requested the Commission to reflect on a European position in this field. According to AT, IGF and enhanced cooperation must remain parallel processes, there are COREPER guidelines supporting enhanced cooperation and there is no need for change. For CH enhanced cooperation is on public policy issues, role of governments and countries. The Brazilian proposal is to have an organisation where governments can discuss with one another. Europe was in favour of enhanced cooperation but it is not clear how to implement that, not handing it to an international organisation.

UK mentioned that they will participate and supported this meeting, inviting to reflect on examples of enhanced cooperation; ex. ICANN and UNESCO, UNESCO and ITU. HU supported this proposal (showcase of enhanced cooperation) as a good way out. In SE view, ICANN is not a very good example and enhanced cooperation already exists. It is not about creating new entities, but need for opportunities to engage in those entities. According to NO, IGF and enhanced cooperation are two distinct solutions pinpointed by WSIS conclusions. NL wish to extend further ideas than a catalog.

The chair concluded that it is not only ICANN, there are other places where decisions about Internet governance are taken.

**Action: To identify and circulate fora where decisions about Internet governance are taken.**

#### **5. WSIS + 10**

In view of the May meeting to review the state of play of the World Summit on Information Society actions, the Chair asked for Group's views. CH considered that the agenda is not very coordinated.

ITU will hold a High Level meeting on 2014 back-to back with the World Telecommunications conference, possibly in Egypt. FI strongly supports process, having drafted the EU position in October 2010.

## **6. IGF 2012**

The Commission is an active supporter of the IGF, a big financial supporter and will actively participate in IGF 2012. MR informed the group about the meetings held in January and April in the European Parliament for IGF preparation. Envisaging a more inclusive participation the Commission organised two meetings, with stakeholders and civil society. There was good turnout in the stakeholders meeting, whereas civil society meeting was less well populated. Following a remark by the UK MR mentioned MS were informed, however, we will strive for an even better effort to pass information to Group members.

## **7. EuroDIG**

SE announced that there are already 150 registrations for EuroDIG, which will take place in Stockholm on 14-15 June 2012. Registration is open until 31 May. Commissioner Kroes, the Queen of Sweden and many ministers are expected in the event.

MR announced that the Commission will co-organise a pre-event before EuroDIG in order to discuss the role of national IGFs, as well as to discuss potential topics which should be highlighted during IGF. This pre-event will take place on 13 June 2012, between 12.00 and 18.00 and the premises of EU Delegation in Stockholm.

## **8. World Conference on International Telecommunications**

MR pinpointed the concern of the Commission to have EU position in order to preserve the "acquis". The Commission (E. Hartog) detailed the involvement of the Commission mentioning that MR will be leading the team which is put up to follow WCIT in Dubai.

SE referred to the timeline mentioning preparatory events taking place in May and June. Furthermore, SE will organise a presentation for the next meeting, on 31 May

The UK was alarmed that the Russian Presidency of the CWG tries to put internet in ITR and that MS are not very vocal. NL, with the support of CH, mentioned the meeting organised by ETNO and ITU on the need new, future oriented ITRs, and that we cannot be successful by simply being against ITRs on Internet.

E. Hartog outlined that we have to have offensive interests and that the EU can play the role of an "honest broker" between the developing and the developed countries.

**Action: Presentation by SE in May 31 meeting.**

## **8. AOB**

### **Internet Governance Strategy**

MR mentioned this Council of Europe initiative suggesting that it is important not to have information overload and inviting Members to send comments.

IE informed that in 18 and 19 of June a conference on human rights will take place in Dublin.

### **Action: Invite MS to send comments**

Next meeting of the HLIG will take place on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012.

Following a request by EuroISPA to address HLIG members directly, members present in the room all gave their agreement that their e-mail addresses can be communicated. However, as this concerns personal data, the Commission will send an e-mail to HLIG members and only addresses of members having signalled their agreement will be communicated.