

1. What is the current situation?

A number of parallel discussions on global Internet governance are taking place throughout the world in different fora and organisations at regional, national, international and global level. Such variety of discussions ensures that a diversity of viewpoints contribute to the evolution of Internet governance. However, the complexity of the institutional framework and of the broad range of policy areas impacted by the Internet, as well as the lack of capacity and expertise in some countries (not only within governments, but also among other stakeholders) are all obstacles that can create a general sense of non-inclusion and disenfranchisement.

This situation leads both to a "silo" mentality and to a "discussion fatigue", while at the same time, people and groups which do not have the necessary resources (in terms of time, knowledge, funding) might find it difficult to engage in the discussion. It also impedes full stakeholder participation with the result that it is often always the same actors of wealthy means that have access to the discussions.

2. Breaking down silos / strengthening inclusiveness

In order for stakeholders to interact productively across organisational boundaries, a different "cross-cutting" approach is needed, focusing on specific topics of discussion (e.g. privacy, security, consumer protection, human rights) rather than on organisations / fora.

This kind of issue-based dialogues could also be supported through technical tools which, by finding and making information widely and easily accessible, could enable a more inclusive participation of all stakeholders, including those with limited administrative and financial resources. The application of advanced IT technologies, such as data mining, semantic analysis and data visualization tools, to openly available data and information on Internet policy and governance, could be very helpful in overcoming the highlighted problems.

3. What is the European Commission proposing?

- A strengthened and improved Internet Governance Forum, as called for in NETmundial, could well serve as a global "clearing house" to ensure that Internet-related issues are widely known to a broad community.
- The IGF, via outcomes or recommendations, should also foster better communication with and among other public or private organisations that are more focused on specific issues.
- The European Commission proposes to launch in 2014 the technical development of the Global Internet Policy Observatory (GIPO) as a resource for the global community.
- GIPO will serve as an online platform for monitoring Internet policy/regulatory/technological developments across the world, using innovative analytical and visualisation tools. The platform will be designed to identify links between different fora and discussions, with the objective to overcome "policy silos", help contextualize information and identify policy trends.
- The European Commission is currently carrying out a feasibility study and will provide seed funding to launch GIPO, without necessarily managing it or being the sole sponsor. The EU is engaged in consultations with many countries from South and North as well as other stakeholders to build a "multi-stakeholder alliance" around GIPO.