



Council of Europe

Note
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Landmark European conference stresses “bottom-up” course of action for internet governance

Strasbourg, 22.10.2008 – A first-ever pan-european meeting of some 150 industry, government and civil society representatives emphasised a participatory approach to dealing with internet governance.

The *European Dialogue on Internet Governance* (EuroDIG), gathered at the Council of Europe on Monday and Tuesday, to prepare the upcoming Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Hyderabad (India), examined in particular the interplay between security, privacy and freedoms on the Web. Participants stressed the importance to make discussions “bottom-up”, with a primary focus on European users, and advocated a human rights-based approach to Internet Governance.

Articulation between national, regional and global levels was a key topic, with particular emphasis on the specific role that the European level can play.

“EuroDIG illustrated the benefits of open and direct interaction among all stakeholders in Internet issues; no single body or institution can determine and shape alone European perspectives about the Internet,” said Bertrand de la Chapelle, French Special Envoy for the Information Society. “There is real momentum and willingness for this dialogue to continue and for it to be nurtured by the hands of representative actors from civil society, the private sector and member states.”

Charting a specific European course, participants examined a wide variety of internet governance issues, from the objective of universal access and the persistence of low broadband access in parts of Europe – such as in the Balkans – to how over-regulation and conflicting regulation can slow Internet access and technology development. The fight against cyber crime with a European accent on human rights was underlined: “No security without privacy” was one of the messages that was repeatedly stressed by participants. Other issues covered included Internet access for people with disabilities and protecting children from harmful Internet content.

This open dialogue among all participating stakeholders also prepared their participation in and contributions to the United Nations Internet Governance Forum in Hyderabad (India) in December 2008.

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