

EUROVISIONI Submission to the Global Digital Compact

Eurovisioni is a Rome's based think-tank nonprofit association, that reflects on the future of media and audiovisual, of which are members BBC, RAI, France Télévisions, Eutelsat and many others organizations based in Europe.

Based on the recent outcomes of the last Conferences held in the last three years and on the participation to other discussion's fora about the future of Internet, Eurovisioni's secretariat has compiled and prepared this contribution to the global Digital Compact debate, on the following areas:

- (1). Connect all people to the Internet, including all schools
- (2). Avoid Internet Fragmentation
- (3). Protect data
- (5). Accountability for discrimination and misleading content
- (8). Other areas: Future of the Internet Governance

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(1). Connect all people to the Internet, including all schools

a) Core Principles

The key elements for a successful meaningful access are: 1) affordability, 2) adaptability, 3) inclusion, 4) reliability and security.

Affordability because the actual costs are still out of the reach of populations of many developing countries. Various solutions could be used to solve this obstacle, such as subsidies from the users or the ISP (from richer area paying higher tariffs than poorer), from the states, or incentivizing the creation of community networks, for instance integrating the internet networks with energy distribution networks. Adaptability because there are more and more technological solutions available, that could provide answers to different needs: from 4 and 5 G networks, to low orbit satellites networks, to frequency sharing between various kind of users. Inclusion because all solutions need to integrate mechanism to avoid the risk to leave behind the most vulnerable, such as the disables or the illiterate, that represent in the world population nearly 1 billion. Reliability and security because the worst could happen for those that arrive to be connected, will be to fall victims of attacks or cybercrime. In this sense, one of the preconditions for the future meaningful access will be a global consensus on what is criminal on the net. A merely commercial approach to the problem of access is not able to solve the problems and instead sometimes create new barriers. So it's important to build from the bottom, from communities, solutions such as community networks that take in account and bypass the problem of language, of affordability and of respect of local traditions and culture. In many LDC the main problem remains the affordability. Despite all efforts of the governments and the agreements with telcos, 1 Gigabyte of data cost 5 USD, when in the rural area the average income is of 1 USD a day. Possible solutions would be to act on taxation of Telco's and to convince them to support local communities, through multistakeholders partnerships, providing affordable or even free bandwidth.



The solution could be a close cooperation between International organizations, regional organizations, governments and private sector.

b) Key Commitment/Pledges/Actions

In order to reach these goals, the following priorities have been identified:

- a) meaningful access is indispensable to comply with the Goal to give access to the Internet to all citizens of the world. The main obstacles to be solved are affordability, adaptability and security all with an important gender dimension;
- b) public policies at the national, regional and global level are needed to incentive and implement the best practices that have been identified during the session and in the report such as community networks, production of local contents, spectrum use for common good. Even temporary limitations to global contents could be envisaged if they can help to support the growth of local contents and services;
- c) on the problem of the cost of devices for Internet access, among the various possible solutions: "one of them is driving cost out by design, another possibility is using local manufacturer, and a third one is on the supply-Side. Some ISPs and some telcos could offer a device at no charge at all as long as you sign up for a long enough period of subscription".

This process a special contribution could come from IGO such as ITU and ICANN that provide meaningful access to LDCs, strengthening the capacity of governments and regulators. "Access is really about creating the enabling environment in terms of governmental economic and technological environment for everyone and everything to connect". among the best practices to be potentially replicated in other region of the world, there is the project PRIDA (supported by ITU, African and European Union) the 55 national governments of Africa are trained to deal with internet in a multistakeholder way, streamlining IG processes and improving Internet Governance skills and capacity across the Continent. To read more, please consult:

https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/255/24314

(2). Avoid Internet Fragmentation

a) Core Principles

The physical world is still operating under tights and detailed rules codified during centuries of legislation, social contracts and so on. while the digital world is operating under different rules (most of them currently deriving from the country of origin of the processes/infrastructures/dominant platforms). The



clash between these two worlds constitutes what we call the today's "global digital information and communication ecosystem". On the lower layer, we have the technical infrastructure that try to exists and proliferates despite all these problems, but that is stretched to its limits by the growing weight of the contradictions multiplying on the other levels. As UN SG has correctly pointed out in its "common agenda", the governance of the digital world and of the fight to climate change are the two main dossiers where only a global approach could have a chance of success. All other strategies nationally based, even if they are rooted into the stronger world countries (US or China) cannot succeed in the long term. Fighting fragmentation "per se" could be a false problem, because what needs to be tackled is to establish a minimum common ground of global rules that could be applied everywhere. European Union is trying on his own to work of such rules, but its approach is based on the largest and richest consumer market of the world. This corpus represents a unique opportunity on which a global set could be established. But has to be revised and adapted to the other 5 billions of users that have different needs and priorities. The recent initiatives of the League of Arab States and of the African Union to replicate the same approach according to their own perspective, are very promising and need to be encouraged and supported.

b) Key Commitment/Pledges/Actions

Role of UN's institutions and agencies is exactly that: to get inspiration from those that have gone farer and build on their experience.1. set up a minimum set of global rules (based on human rights respect) through a series of international treaties (or opening for global signature existing Treaties such as those of the Council of Europe -Convention 108+- and OECD on global minimum tax); 2. set up a plan to adapt and improve national legislations all over the LDC to comply with these rules 3. In this specific regard, UNESCO could play a special role in the media, education and cultural spheres, where it has an uncontestable mandate from the world's governments. The implementation of the Internet Universality Indicators all over the world, but also and especially within international bodies and agencies, could be part of these efforts.In the past "public interest" was defined according to compartmentalization between various disciplines and sectors. "Public domain" was identified in the field of access to culture. "Universal access" was identified in the field of telecommunication and postal services. "Right to cultural diversity" was identified in the field of cultural goods. "Public service broadcasting" and "community radio/media" concepts were developed in the frame of media and communication. "Public libraries" in the frame of access to written culture. "Museums" for the access to cultural heritage. "Public school" for the access to culture. All these processes need a rethink and need to be integrated into a true "global digital information and communications ecosystem" of the future. This is an inevitable process. The later will be implemented, the more difficult would be to run the future world, and inequalities of today will be only a pale remembering compared to those that expect us in future. All these need to be revised and re-invented in order to adapt to the new digital world. All these rules, regulations, structures and processes need to be integrated into the true "global digital information and communications ecosystem" of the future. This



effort needs to be built over international treaties and then declined through regional and national processes, using regulation, co-regulation or self-regulation when appropriate.

- A clear regulatory framework will be essential to define in accordance with international standards the personal data that cannot be exploited in any way, and the procedures for obtaining the consent of users for the exploitation of non-sensitive personal data.
- Determining the rights and duties between countries and digital companies, such as obligating social media companies to develop a transparent and clear mechanism to reveal the amounts collected from users in each country, similarly to the tax accounting process for private non- digital companies.
- Requiring social media companies to disclose the mechanism for maintaining the security and confidentiality of users' data in any country and to prove that they have not been used illegally.
- Emphasizing transparency in dealing with monitoring and clearly defining offensive content, in
 addition to identifying preventive measures to limit its spread.o Putting in place and enforcing
 binding local laws that ensure the speedy response of social media companies in deleting content
 that violates national laws, such as the content inciting to violence, hatred and racism, gender or
 regional segregation and discrimination, false and misleading news and cybercrimes such as data
 theft, extortion and sexual harassment.

(3). Protect data

a) Core Principles

- Developing a common and comprehensive strategy to deal with global digital platforms based on the best international models and practices in the field.
- Importance of focusing primarily on the legislative framing of the relationship with global digital platforms, at the regional level.

b) Key Commitment/Pledges / Actions

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- Putting in place and enforcing binding local laws that ensure the speedy response of social media companies in deleting content that violates national laws, such as the content inciting to violence, hatred and racism, gender or regional segregation and discrimination, false and misleading news and cybercrimes such as data theft, extortion and sexual harassment.

(5). Accountability for discrimination and misleading content

In parallel to many opportunities, the rapid and pervasive emergence of digital technologies potentially exposes (young) people to a plethora of online threats on a regular basis. These include disinformation, misinformation and political propaganda, conspiracy theories, cyberbullying, recruitment efforts by extremist organizations, cyber predators, phishing, scams, and malware. There is evidence that people of all ages are increasingly at risk and that they are being exposed to various forms of disinformation (e.g. what is colloquially referred to as 'fake news'). Information overload and the lack of effective ways to filter information poses another challenge. This challenge makes it necessary for individuals to be able to critically approach, assess and verify information and become more resilient to threats. At the societal level, the online manipulation of information, increasingly sophisticated and easily disseminated, has affected people's trust in mainstream media and reliable sources of information. Human vulnerabilities are exploited to undermine political institutions, public opinion and the quality of democratic debate across the EU and elsewhere. Educational institutions are in a unique position to help educate young people about the threats identified above. Schools and other educational institutions have received a societal mandate to educate future generations. Due to the constant exposure of young people to the digital universe, those involved in education and training have an important task to stay abreast of an everchanging environment and equip young people with the critical thinking skills required to exercise judgment, analyse complex realities and recognise the difference between opinion and fact. The importance of promoting digital literacy among school students has been underlined by the European Commission, UNESCO, the OECD and the Council of Europe, among others. All recognise that formal and non-formal education, as well as training can play a critical role in expanding awareness of how to tackle disinformation, promote online safety and contribute to fostering critical thinking skills among students. These are essential when navigating the online world, to read more, please consult:



Guidelines for teachers and educators on tackling disinformation and promoting digital literacy through education and training – Publications Office of the European Union, 2022. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/28248

b) Key Commitment/ Pledges/ Actions

The following best practices have been identified in Europe as possible examples to be implement worldwide. Existing Guidelines to counter disinformation and promote digital literacy

- #1: The European Commission's Spot and fight disinformation toolkit on identifying and addressing disinformation is targeted at secondary school teachers. It includes an editable presentation with real life examples and group exercises as well as an instruction booklet for teachers.
- #2: UNESCO's media and information literacy curriculum, Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely!, offers a comprehensive competency framework of media and information literacy and structured pedagogical suggestions for educators and learners. See chapter 4 for a more elaborate description.
- #3: The Digital Citizenship Education Handbook by the Council of Europe is intended for teachers and parents, education decision makers and platform providers alike. See Chapter 4 for a more elaborate description.
- #4: Teaching and Learning with Twitter is a Twitter and UNESCO resource on media and information literacy that offers practical advice informing pedagogical methods and outcomes. It can help educators with designing lessons around media and information literacy and inform them, as well as other social actors, on how Twitter can be used towards improving learning outcomes.
- #5: The Euroguide Handbook aims to offer teachers and social workers practical tools to respond to sociopolitical or religious arguments in order to prevent radicalisation in school environments. Guidance is offered on how to create resilient environments and safe spaces where vulnerable young people can open up, sharpen their social and emotional skills, and have their self-esteem improved.
- #6: The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has issued Child Online Protection (COP) guidelines, a comprehensive set of recommendations for all relevant stakeholders (parents, educators, policy makers, industry) on how to contribute to the development of a safe and empowering online environment for children and young people. Towards this, the advocated approach involves both protection and empowerment of children.
- #7: The Information literacy guide for teachers and students (Finland) includes information adapted for school use, group work assignments, and reading and linking tips.

 Read more:

https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/72421f53-4458-11ed-92ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en



(8). Other areas (please specify) Future of the Internet Governance

a) Core Principles

WHAT WE WANT: 1. A coordinated process towards a global Internet Governance that shall include and streamline all existing process (IGF and NRI, WSIS follow up, Digital Cooperation, various UN agencies) avoiding duplications and overlaps. 2. Such process will have to be centered on the UN SG (through its Tech Envoy office and other related offices). All the IG processes need to report their conclusions, proposals of solutions and of Treaties to the UN SG that will refer to the UNGA. But viceversa – UNSG has to use all existing IG processes as testbed for solutions to the various problems on the table (access, cybersecurity, A.I., data protection, etc.). The various UN specialized agencies and other international bodies concerned will have to be part of this process, in a synergetic way. 3. A different approach towards the media, to involve them and make part of the GDC process. Only through an active involvement of the media this process could become relevant to the ruling classes and be able to involve citizens.

b) Key Commitment/Pledges/Actions

WHAT WE DON'T WANT:

- 1. If wish 1 above will not be implemented, the GDC will be another structure on the top of the existing ones, and they all risk to remain talk shops without any concrete impact on reality.
- 2. If Leadership Panel will not be able to play its role properly, there is a high risk of overlaps and conflicts between MAG and LP that could paralyze the IGF work and hamper its contribution to the whole process to build a global Internet Governance.
- 3. If UNSG will not exercise its own leadership role directly, in tight cooperation with UNGA, and through all existing dialogue platforms, the risk that the whole process will not fly is very high.