

## **EuroDIG Plenary 4: Arrangements for a European IGF and Future EuroDIG events**

### **Responses to questions about national IGF structures: France**

#### **1. EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL IGF STRUCTURES?**

**WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR NATIONAL IGFs DISCUSSIONS?**

**HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE THAT YOUR NATIONAL IGF DISCUSSIONS DO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE POLICY DISCUSSION AND ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION PROCESS?**

**HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE THAT THE RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS GET TOGETHER AND HAVE A CONSTRUCTIVE EXCHANGE?**

**HOW DO YOU MAKE SURE THAT YOUR NATIONAL IGF HELPS PEOPLE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES RELATED TO INTERNET GOVERNANCE?**

The French Forum on internet rights is the closest structure to a national IGF in France.

On the basis of the debates that it has organized and the conclusions of its working groups, the Forum makes recommendations either to private sector, calling for self-regulatory measures, or public institutions, so as to reform the existing law. This mission can be either the Forum's own initiative or a response to a direct referral by the government, the Parliament or independent authorities of the administration such as the CSA (French Supreme Television and Radio Commission), the ARCEP (French Telecommunications Regulator), the CNIL (French National Commission on Liberties regarding Information and Computing)...

The Forum can also encourage exchanges of experiences between professionals of various fields. In this case, it does not make recommendations but may suggest specific uses or practices.

Since its creation, the Forum has made 29 recommendations on topics like Internet and labour relations, e-administration, responsibility (hypertext links, forums of discussion), child protection, online advertising, ethics label for ISP, e-commerce, online games...All of them have been implemented.

The impact on the legislation process is guaranteed by the fact that the government can have the initiative of the creation of a working group. Then the recommendations are officially transmitted to interested members of the parliament. Finally, judges regularly refer to the Forum's recommendations in their judgments.

The composition of the working group is a key element. To ensure that relevant stakeholders are part of the discussion, the composition has to be confirmed by the Executive board of the forum representing members from professional actors and users.

Members of these working groups often have a different understanding of the issues at stake. That is the reason why all working group begin with some specific meetings where experts are auditioned. The Forum also organizes information meetings where all its members are invited.

It is fundamental that each person is able to express its opinion and in order to explain the procedures a dedicated methodological guide has been created.



## **2. EUROPEAN APPROACH ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE?**

**WHAT IS "EUROPEAN" ABOUT THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE DISCUSSION IN EUROPE?**

**WHAT CAN EUROPE CONTRIBUTE TO THE GLOBAL INTERNET GOVERNANCE DISCUSSION?**

**WHAT ARE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES, BEST PRACTICES AND HOW SHOULD THEY FEED INTO THE GLOBAL IGF?**

The European dimension of Internet governance is important while regarding:

- The European identity (it is necessary that member states can speak a common voice)
- The importance of defending some humanistic values.
- The economical interest of European actors.

The role of Europe should be to ensure that restraints in all internet activities are based on a real democratic ground.

## **3. EUROPEAN IGF: MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES?**

**IS THERE A NEED/DESIRE FOR A EUROPEAN IGF?**

**IF YES, WHAT SHOULD BE ITS MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES?**

**WHICH STAKEHOLDERS SHOULD PARTICIPATE?**

The French internet rights Forum is pushing for a European tool dedicated to internet Governance for a long time and launched in December 2003, in partnership with organizations from 6 European countries and with the support of Erkki Liikanen, European Commissioner responsible for Enterprise and Information society, the European Internet Coregulation Network.

The Internet rights Forum also published, last year, a press release with AFNIC, CNIL and ISOC asking for the creation of a European IGF.

It is necessary to build a European IGF to help European actors to express their proposals at the international level. National IGF are key elements of a regional initiative.

Then some themes have to be dealt with a specific discussion between European countries before a multiregional approach. These themes should be at least Privacy, Securing the use of the internet and fighting against illegal content, Domain names and Access...

The Internet Rights forum has the feeling that only national IGF should participate in the European IGF. Their role should be to organize discussions with national stakeholders then share national initiatives and help building a united approach inside the European IGF. With too many stakeholders, this task becomes harder.

#### **4. EUROPEAN IGF: STRUCTURE AND WORKING METHODS?**

**HOW SHOULD SUCH A REGIONAL FORUM WORK? HOW SHOULD IT BE ORGANIZED AND HOW SHOULD IT BE FUNDED?**

**HOW SHOULD IT LINK TO NATIONAL, GLOBAL AND OTHER REGIONAL INTERNET GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES?**

**HOW COULD IT HELP TO IMPROVED E-PARTICIPATION IN INTERNET GOVERNANCE IN EUROPE?**

The French Internet rights Forum think that the European IGF should be conceived in the same way that Internet is built: decentralized and modular. It must be understood as a ring of national IGF.

It would be based on a lightweight secretary that could help gathering information, establish subjects and be a link between all national IGF. A dedicated information system would be needed.

Discussions would happen mainly online but a regional meeting could happen once or twice a year.

National IGF must be the place for stakeholders to discuss at first. Then the role of the national IGF would be to report the debates on the regional area. This would also ensure that local actors could have their proposals or points of view discussed in the regional then global IGF, even if they can't afford to participate in supranational initiatives.