

EuroDIG 2009, 14-15 September 2009, EBU Headquarters, Geneva

Welcome Statement by Veronique Gigon, Deputy Director, Swiss Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM)

(translation from the French original)

Dear Participants

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you – in the name of OFCOM, the Swiss Federal Office of Communications – here at the EBU headquarters in Geneva, to the second Pan-European Dialogue on Internet Governance which we are co-organizing with the EBU and the support of the Council of Europe.

First, I would like to make clear that – although we are organizing it - EuroDIG is **not an event which is owned by** the EBU, OFCOM or the Council of Europe. EuroDIG is an event that you all have created.

It is not owned by any single nor a group of institutions, but by you all who participate in it. EuroDIG has been prepared by an ever-growing open-ended multi-stakeholder network, taking into account all input that came from whoever showed an interest in contributing to this platform. What we, the organizers, have done is to provide the resources necessary for the organization of this years platform.

The Swiss Government has significantly contributed to the creation and development of the Internet Governance Forum. This because we believe in its value as a unique global platform for a true and open multi-stakeholder discussion of public policy issues related to the Internet. Likewise, we have been supporting the idea of creating a similar platform for interaction and exchange on European Level since its beginning. Why?

All European Governments, citizens and businesses are more and more relying on the internet for their daily operations. We are all enjoying the opportunities that the internet offers and we are all trying to minimize the risks that go with it. All of us have therefore an interest to agree on some common fundamental principles on how the Internet should be used and governed. These principles should guarantee the same goals for the virtual world like for the real world: a maximum of rights and freedoms with only those restrictions that are necessary to ensure an adequate level of security that users and businesses need in order to exercise their rights and freedoms.

We all know that neither governments nor business or civil society will be able to face the challenges brought about by the Internet on their own. And we are convinced that this Pan-European multi-stakeholder dialogue will help to identify common European principles, exchange ideas and identify solutions about how the internet should be best used and governed in the interest of the general public.

The gathering of diversity of experience and views between the different European stakeholders and cultures, can contribute to raising our own awareness and help us identify the challenges the internet and its governance bring about. It can promote a better understanding of the respective roles of the different stakeholders in rising to these challenges. Finally, this dialogue can also help us Europeans to better communicate our experience and perspectives to the other regions of the world.

In addition, we think it is also necessary to have all regions of Europe included in this dialogue.

At the first EuroDIG last year in Strasbourg, we realized that there were very few participants from the countries in central and south eastern Europe - countries have more difficulties in making their voices heard in the Internet Governance discussion. This is why the Swiss Government sponsored a Diplo Foundations' Internet Governance Capacity Building Programme with a special focus on stakeholders from these countries – including the participation of the best students at this EuroDIG. You will hear more about this Programme during tonight's reception. We would also like to thank the Council of Europe who also sponsored the participation of experts from central and south eastern Europe.

EuroDIG is a platform open to everybody! I would like to encourage YOU ALL to actively participate in the discussions! You are all experts in your fields and are invited to bring in your views, ideas and concerns.

And we do not only want your views on the issues that will be discussed, we also want your views on whether you think a Pan-European Dialogue-Forum on Internet Governance should be established on a more sustained basis. Whatever you will want to call this in the future – EuroDIG , European IGF, or anything else – , we should now discuss the objectives of this platform?

And – if you think that there is a value added, we have to discuss how it should work, how it should be organized and financed? Your views on these are questions are relevant.

We are convinced is that a European Internet Governance Dialogue Forum has a reason to be. And we would be willing – and if you share this view –to continue to support the future development of such a platform with other partners.

Let me finish by wishing you a fruitful and interactive debate!

Thank you for your attention.