

# European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG)

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Ladies and Gentleman,  
Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a pleasure and an honour to be here at the second meeting of the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG)..

Now in the fourth year of its initial five-year mandate, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is established as an important arena for international multi-stakeholder dialogue about policy issues affecting the Internet's management, development and deployment. Indeed, in an area where more national and regional dialogue is required, national and regional IGF's have allowed a platform of participation of different stakeholders especially from developing countries.

Perhaps one of the most significant developments is the spread of national and regional IGF initiatives.

We have seen regional IGF meetings in Europe, Africa and Latin America, such as

- o EuroDIG – Strasbourg 2008 /Geneva 2009
- o Caribbean IGF – 5 meetings
- o Latin American and Caribbean IGF – 2 meetings
- o East Africa IGF (EAIGF) – 2 meetings in Nairobi in 2008 and 2009
- o West African IGF – on 14-16 October in Accra, Ghana

In addition, there have been or there will be national meetings in the United Kingdom, in Italy, Denmark, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and the United States.

There is much value in these meetings, as international coordination cannot work if there is no coordination at the national and regional level to build on. While the national and regional IGFs can feed into the global IGF meeting, they should not be seen as a preparatory conference, but as a value in themselves. I heard in East Africa as well as in Latin America that they would continue holding regional meetings, regardless whether the global IGF would continue or not. This interest in a regional IGF process reflects the significance of the concept of multistakeholder dialogue..

Common to all these meetings is that they reflect the needs and priorities of their regions. The East African region, for instance, is in the process of working towards the creation of a single market. It is therefore understandable that the countries concerned (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi), created a fairly elaborate process at the national level of each country that fed into the regional meeting. The common aim is to help create a regional market and ensure adequate policy settings are in place. One of the most striking features in the EAIGF is the wholehearted endorsement of multistakeholder dialogue, by top government officials who participating in online discussions.

One group that was not identified by WSIS as a separate stakeholder group is manifesting itself in the IGF context: parliamentarians. The East African meeting culminated in a meeting with MPs and also the EuroDIG includes a session with Parliamentarians. This is a most welcome development, as it is members of Parliament who will decide whether new laws are needed for the Internet or whether existing legislation is sufficient. In order to be able to make the right decision, it is important that they engage in the discussions with the industry, civil society and the Internet community.

Each region has its own priority. While in Africa the priority remains access or improved access, I expect that the discussions here will be based on the European core values of rule of law, democracy and respect of human rights. I expect a strong message to come from to the global IGF that will underscore the importance of these principles, also in the field of Internet governance.

I look forward to your discussions and conclusions and wish you a good meeting.