



Freedom Online Coalition Chair's Summary

Third Freedom Online conference, 16-18 June 2013, Tunis, Tunisia

- Tunisia organized the third Freedom Online meeting in Tunis, Tunisia, from June 16th to 18th 2013, in which the central themes of the first Freedom Online conference were built upon. The conference aimed to provide a multistakeholder platform to discuss issues of Internet freedom with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa. Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) member countries came to Tunis to engage with other governments, regional organisations, international institutions, civil society and the private sector, to reinforce our efforts in this regard.
- The Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) was established at the inaugural Freedom Online conference in The Hague, the Netherlands, on December 8th and 9th 2011. FOC member states have committed to working together diplomatically to voice concern over measures to restrict internet freedom and support those individuals whose human rights online are curtailed. The FOC met again in Nairobi in September 2012, when the government of Kenya hosted the second major conference. The Government of Tunisia is proud to host the third meeting this year.
- Since its first meeting, the coalition has grown from 15 initial members to 21 today. The Freedom Online Coalition welcomes Georgia and Germany as its new members today and is glad to announce that there is an active interest in the coalition.
- In particular the conference focused on the following issues of concern:
 1. How can we work towards an internet that remains both free and secure.
 2. How can we build a digital development agenda that allows more people access to internet and ICT.
 3. How do we assure that both companies and governments assure transparency and privacy on the internet.
- We are pleased to announce that the fourth Freedom Online conference will be held in Tallinn, Estonia in the spring of 2014.
- The founding principles of the Freedom Online Coalition (included with this paper) were the point of departure for the Tunis event, which has been prepared with the active input of many stakeholders in Tunisia and around the world. Prior to the conference, two

days of training and capacity development workshops took place for bloggers, hackers, human rights defenders, activists, and government officials. The conference has been prepared with the help of an NGO Steering Committee representing experts on Internet freedom around the world. The coalition will continue to engage with civil society in the preparation of its coming conferences and to assist in further developing its future work.

- The Freedom Online Coalition notes with concern the continued harassment, intimidation and killings of journalists, civil society members and other professionals working online, as well as illicit monitoring, filtering and hacking, and urges all participating States to fully implement our common commitments on freedom of expression, assembly, and association. We are no less concerned by the attempts to arbitrarily block or control Internet content, and reiterate our commitment to the principle that the human rights that people have offline enjoy the same protection online.
- Members of the coalition have gathered informally as governments and in consultation with other stakeholders at numerous conferences and intergovernmental meetings relevant to internet freedom as well as in specific countries, to coordinate viewpoints, share relevant information, and discuss strategies to advance an open internet in each context. Frequent FOC meetings took place last year, in forums ranging from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to the United Nations Human Rights Council, to the Internet Governance Forum and the Stockholm Internet Forum. An example of joint action since the founding of the coalition was coordination among FOC members during the ITU WCIT meeting, December 2012, in Dubai and a joint statement at the OSCE Internet Freedom conference in Vienna, February 2013.
- As the next occasion to meet in person, FOC members look forward to attending the Internet Governance Forum in October in Bali, Indonesia, and consulting with other stakeholders there on issues of concern to Internet freedom.
- Looking forward to Tallinn, FOC members intend in the coming months to continue the dialogue held in Tunis through the establishment of working groups on key issues of concern. Additionally, the FOC will establish a mechanism of regular communication with other stakeholders throughout the year. Finally, before Tallinn, FOC members will aim to hold national consultations on Internet freedom with civil society and industry in their countries.

The Freedom Online Coalition consists of Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, Latvia, the Republic of Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Sweden, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Freedom Online Founding Declaration: Joint Action for Free Expression on the Internet

1 Underscoring our commitment to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and reaffirming that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers, as well as the

right to freedom of assembly and association, the right to the protection of the law against arbitrary interference with his or her privacy, and the freedom of religion or belief, amongst others,

2 Recalling our commitment to the principle that the human rights that people have offline enjoy the same protection online,

3 Noting that the Internet has always been fueled by policies that promote the free flow of information and that protect human rights and foster innovation, creativity, and economic growth,

4 Noting with concern that in many countries these human rights and fundamental freedoms are increasingly subject to restrictions, whereby the flow of information on the Internet and through connection technologies is limited beyond the few exceptional circumstances in which restrictions are acceptable in accordance with international human rights legal obligations,

5 Noting that governments are increasingly making use of a variety of measures to limit these freedoms in a manner contrary to their obligations, such as illicit monitoring, filtering and hacking, on- and offline repression of network technology users, including intimidation and arrests, and even completely shutting down the Internet and mobile networks,

6 Recognizing the need for States to protect the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the Internet and through connection technologies, and to support individuals, organisations and institutions who use new technologies to promote human rights, democracy and development,

7 Considering the key importance of engagement by all relevant stakeholders, including governments, businesses, civil society, academics and other experts, in protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms online, and underlining our commitment to work closely together in a multi-stakeholder process to further Internet freedom globally,

8 Considering the responsibility of businesses to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms on the Internet and through connection technologies, and the ways in which those technologies, products, and services can be used to impact these rights and freedoms,

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We, as participating States, dedicate ourselves to:

A Establishing a coalition to share, as appropriate, information between our States on potential violations and other measures that undermine the enjoyment of freedom of expression and other human rights on the Internet and through connection technologies around the world, and to consider measures needed to protect and advance these rights, working in close engagement with all relevant stakeholders. The coalition intends to hold a senior-level meeting at least once a year and maintain frequent working-level coordination.

B Collaborating closely to support – both politically and through project aid – the

ability of individuals, particularly those operating in repressive environments, to exercise their human rights through the Internet and connection technologies. Participating States intend to engage with other governments, regional organisations, international institutions, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders to reinforce our efforts in this regard.

C Cooperating together in appropriate international and regional organizations and through our diplomacy with individual countries to promote the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly with respect to the Internet and connection technologies, and

D Engaging together as members of this coalition with information and communication technology businesses from across the globe on their responsibility to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms online. Participating states intend to encourage such businesses to adopt practices, as well as policies or statements of principle, that address concerns related to the export and misappropriation of technologies for repressive ends, inappropriate requests for personal data for political purposes, and illegitimate blocking of content, and to take all other measures necessary to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms on the Internet and through connection technologies.