



## Freedom Online Coalition - Friends of the Chair Call #15

Wednesday 25 April 2018

**Attending:** Argentina, Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, US; Support Unit (SU)

**Apologies:** Costa Rica, Norway, UK

### MINUTES

#### Housekeeping

- SU gave an update on FOC-related meetings at RightsCon:
  - Members discussed draft agenda for FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting:
    - The Netherlands proposed the addition of a slot to the agenda to facilitate active discussion and exchange on policy developments.
  - Members discussed outline for FOC Open Forum session:
    - The timing of this session has changed to **Wednesday, May 16 (17:15 - 18:15)**.
    - During the Open Forum, FOC will launch the Internet censorship statement; members will give updates on the work of the FOC, present priorities for the German Chairmanship, update audience on the Annual Conference, outline progress towards implementing FOC Action Plan for 2018, and introduce the Advisory Network (AN).
    - Members suggested making the discussion as interactive as possible and involve all present FOC members in the discussion.

**Action >>** Members yet to RSVP to FOC-related events in Toronto, to do so;

**Action >>** SU to amend Strategy and Coordination Meeting agenda to accommodate suggestions.

#### Updates on FOC Chairmanship

- Annual Conference
  - Germany provided an update on preparations for FO Conference 2018.
    - Currently in the process of preparing the concept note to share with Members shortly; AN is expected to help shape the program.
- Implementation of the San Jose Work Plan:
  - Operationalising the Stockholm TOR:
    - SU, Germany and Canada provided an update on FOC-AN;
    - Members discussed protocol to develop FOC statements with input from AN.

**Action >>** Friends to review and sign off amendments to the draft protocol for developing joint statements with AN input **by COB Monday, April 30**.

- SU provided an update on development of Evaluation Framework for Member Review and Termination (EF):

- SU thanked Members for their feedback on the latest draft, which has been forwarded to the consultant. A final draft of the EF and mock report of framework applied to a country should be ready for Members' review in May.
- Plan of Action 2018
  - Germany delivered an update on Program of Action 2018:
    - Objective 1:
      - The deadline for the silence procedure on the statement on Internet Censorship is Friday 27 April.
      - Canada stated that it had begun drafting the statement on shrinking spaces for civil society. Following the agreement on the draft protocol Canada would involve the AN in drafting of statement.
    - Objective 2:
      - Statement on Digital Divides to be co-drafted by Ghana and Germany.
    - Objective 3:
      - Canada expressed interest in supporting the drafting of the statement on Cybersecurity Laws later in the year.
- Diplomatic Coordination
  - Members delivered updates on diplomatic coordination efforts;
    - Germany held a meeting for the Geneva Human Rights Network of the FOC on Thursday, 26 April, at the German Mission.
  - Estonia raised the next cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR):
    - Certain countries under review have concerning human rights records in relation to freedom of expression and human rights online.
    - This may be an opportunity for FOC members to raise country-specific concerns in a coordinated way, both via local network in Geneva and by coordinating submissions being drafted in capitals.

**Action >>** Members to communicate with desk officers and Missions in Geneva to consider raising FOC priorities in their statements during upcoming UPR cycle.

#### AOB

- The Netherlands noted World Press Freedom Day in Accra, Ghana (2-3 May), and the Hague Summit for Accountability and Internet Democracy, (30 May - 1 June).
- Estonia noted the launch of an informal OSCE Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists, the initiative of the French, Lithuanian and Swedish Delegations to the OSCE, with many members of FOC.