

Minutes of the Friends of the Chair Call #2 - April 29, 2020 at 2pm UTC

Attendance: Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, UK and the US; Support Unit (SU)

Housekeeping

- Recap of action items from the March call
 - All action items from the March Friends of the Chair (FotC) call have been completed.
- FOC outlook and calendar
 - Update on COVID-19 and rescheduled/canceled meetings and events.
 - Due to COVID-19, in-person meetings and conferences are being canceled or rescheduled:
 - As RightsCon Costa Rica will be postponed and moved to next year, there will be no in-person Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM) in June.
 - Members agreed that the SCM will take place remotely, possibly spread over multiple days/weeks, via video conferencing. SU will circulate the draft agenda soon, and the specific date and time will be confirmed in the upcoming weeks.
 - Remote working platforms
 - Members agreed to use WebEx as the default conferencing platform starting from the next monthly call.
 - WebEx supports video conferencing, including a possibility to join a call via a web link or a phone.

Action>> SU to provide options for the dates and draft agenda for the Strategy and Coordination Meeting in June ahead of the May FotC call.

FOC Chairmanship

- Update on FOC Chairmanship 2021
 - On the 2021 Program of Action, Finland welcomes, by mid-May, ideas from FOC member states on activities of FOC in 2021, and how FOC actions should be further developed, with the aim of having a strategic discussion at the SCM in June, and finalizing the PoA at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Poland in November.

Action>> Finland welcomes Members' input on Program of Action 2021 activities by mid-May.

Program of Action 2020

- General updates
 - Update on PoA 2020: Rethinking working methods and activities in light of Covid-19:
 - SU circulated a revised PoA ahead of this call to include a note that its priority areas, appropriate working methods, and schedule of activities may be subject to change due to the pandemic.
 - Members agreed unanimously to approve the amendments.
- Diplomatic Coordination
 - New York, Paris, Geneva, Vienna: n/a
 - UN High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (HLPDC)
 - Canada prepared a consolidated response reflecting concerns among Members regarding both the process and the substance of the UN HLPDC Recommendation 3A/B, and sent it to the co-Champions.
 - The co-Champions clarified the process of requesting input into the roadmap for Recommendation 3A/B. The response has been shared with the Friends of the Chair.
 - FOC network initiative in San Francisco
 - Following conversations in Accra, Austria expressed their interest in setting up an FOC network in Silicon Valley in an effort to build stronger relationships with the tech industry to promote human rights; and to establish effective information channels between the private sector and FOC.
 - SU suggested that the initiative is included in the PoA 2021.

- Members were supportive of the initiative but agreed that further discussions are needed in order to set up a concrete plan of action.
 - Germany was interested in how the synthesis of the FOC network in San Francisco with the work of AccessNow would look like.
 - Canada noted that the initiative demonstrates how non-Friends of the Chair can engage with the FOC.
- Shaping Global Norms
 - Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights
 - Task force on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights (T-FAIR) held its introductory call on April 23. Canada thanked Members for their interest and participation.
 - T-FAIR will aim to launch the first draft of the Joint Statement on AI and Human Rights at IGF in Poland in November.
 - Following FOC-AN's recommendations, T-FAIR plans to focus its work on facial recognition and content moderation, including integrating cross-cutting work.
 - Following input from T-FAIR members, the Task Force discussed adding a mapping initiative on AI as another avenue of work.
 - Disinformation
 - Members agreed that the Joint Statement on Disinformation can be shortened.
 - COVID-19
 - US thanked Members, SU and AN for their support, input and help with drafting of the Joint Statement on COVID-19.
 - The draft is currently with the US State Department to receive the necessary clearance.
 - Next steps after clearance from the State Department:
 - Request redline edits from the full FOC - 5 days.
 - Incorporate final comments and send to Friends for sign off.
 - Start silence procedure - 5 days.
 - US is working on a dissemination strategy with FOC-AN who suggested holding a public panel to launch the statement.
 - US would welcome any suggestions and would follow up with Friends bilaterally on developing the dissemination strategy.
 - Canada suggested exploring the option of launching the statement on the margins of virtual RightsCon meetings.

Action>> SU to circulate the revised PoA 2020 to FOC members and FOC-AN, and to share it on the FOC website.

Action>> Canada to share with the Friends an updated document reflecting next steps for T-FAIR.

Action>> Finland and UK to share with the Friends a shortened version of the Joint Statement on Disinformation.

Advisory Network (FOC-AN)

- Update on FOC-AN activities
 - AN held their monthly call on Monday April 27.
 - Priority agenda items discussed on the call included best practices for providing input on Joint Statements, T-FAIR, and an ongoing discussion on accountability mechanisms for FOC governments and how FOC-AN can play a role in upholding commitments.

FOC Membership

- Updates on FOC Member engagement
 - N/A
- Updates on enlargement of FOC membership

AOB

N/A