Freedom Online Coalition - Friends of the Chair Call #1
Wednesday 30 January

Attendance: Costa Rica, Finland, Germany, Ghana, the Netherlands, UK, US; Support Unit (SU)
Apologies: *Canada,* Estonia**,** Norway

Housekeeping

- The Support Unit (SU) welcomed the Friends of Chair to the first meeting of 2019 and welcomed new contact points for Ghana, Godfred Kumi Kwakye and Albert Antwi-Boasiako, the UK, Zeenat Khanche, and Costa Rica, Patricia Ugalde.
- FOC outlook for the Month Ahead
    - The SU informed Members that it will be submitting an administrative contribution to UN High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation on behalf of the Coalition. The SU will share the 'Basic Documents' pack produced on the occasion of the Conference to highlight principles for the Panel's consideration.
    - The SU noted that future submissions would benefit from standing language for contributions, which the SU will draft and circulate for sign-off in forthcoming weeks.
    - The SU noted that the first call of the Advisory Network will be on Thursday 7 February.
- Update on Internet Freedom Calendar of Events
    - The SU had shared a timeline of upcoming events in the year with Members. The aim of the Calendar is to i) highlight events pertinent to the Coalition's interests and facilitate outreach and ii) to guide opportunities for activities under the Program of Action. The SU noted that this will be a live document which can continue to be developed and improved through the year, ultimately hosting this on the FOC website.
    - Finland raised the upcoming AI and Human Rights Conference in Helsinki, organised with the Council of Europe.
        - Finland informed Members that this will be an expert-level conference on the impact of the development of AI on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Finland invited the Friends of the Chair to express their interest directly, noting that certain eligible countries can be supported with some costs. Depending on the number of FOC Members present at the event, Finland may hold an informal meeting for FOC representatives.

- - - The Netherlands welcomed the rule of law and democratic focus of the Conference, noting that their ministry for the interior will be present and the MFA might attend. The Netherlands additionally noted the Advisory Network's interest in a establishing a working group on AI and that this conference might provide an opportunity for the FOC participants to discuss the AN's advice.
    - Germany offered to facilitate organising an FOC Strategy and Coordination Meeting on the margins of the IGF in Berlin in November.
    - The Netherlands noted two events taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: World Press Freedom Day taking place in 1-3 May and the Forum on Internet Freedom Africa, 26-28 September. The Netherlands additionally noted EuroDIG could provide an opportunity for a FOC meeting.
    - The UK noted the Foreign Secretary's campaign on Media Freedom, informing Members that they will be hosting a Media Freedom Conference in the summer.
- SU informed Members that the newsletter is moving from a monthly to quarterly basis to ensure substantivity and to coincide with the restructuring of the Program of Action.

Action >> Members to follow up with further suggestions for events to include in the Internet Freedom Calendar.

Action >> Members to contact Finland with interest in attending their Conference on AI and Human Rights taking place on the 26-27 February.

FOC Chairmanship
- Update on FOC Chairmanship 2019
- Annual Conference
    - The SU noted that the Annual Conference in Berlin had received positive feedback from the community, and invited further reflections from Members.
    - The Netherlands thanked SU and Germany for their efforts. The Netherlands noted stakeholders at the Conference had demonstrated a need for the Coalition to work together in the face of growing threats to Internet Freedom, and added the importance to set priorities and manage expectations. It was noted that the high expectations of stakeholders simultaneous demand more from the Coalition while also demonstrating the significance of the Coalition.

Program of Action 2019
- Development of Program of Action for 2019
    - The SU had circulated the draft Program of Action which includes submissions as of 25 January. The Program of Action had been put together following the input of FOC

and FOC-AN Members and been restructured to integrate the FOC's core working methods of diplomatic coordination, shaping global norms and multistakeholder engagement.

- The SU noted that the AN's proactive advice had the following key recommendations:
    - Prioritisation of strategic geopolitical leadership. The AN has proposed a working group on impactful ways of "improving the offer".
    - Prioritisation of a human rights based approach to cybersecurity including through the issuance of the Joint Statement on Cybersecurity Laws.
    - Establish an ad hoc working group to explore the implications of the use of AI and facial recognition technologies on human rights. Canada has suggested a Joint Statement on Artificial Intelligence.
    - A note on other issues on tackling disinformation, which had additionally been suggested by Canada and had been incorporated into the current draft of the Program of Action.
- SU noted that Members are welcome to consider suggesting that any additional AN recommendations be incorporated in the Program of Action.
- The SU noted that US has since provided suggestions which will be integrated into Program of Action for recirculation and sign off. The US suggested developing a complementary internal resource to help track progress against internal and external objectives . Members expressed support for these resources.
- Members provided additional input on the current draft:
    - The US noted that their input aims to strengthen the Program of Action and provide a useful tool for members to track their activities. The US noted that a comprehensive internal schedule of activities also can strengthen ownership, transparency and accountability in carrying out the activities.
    - The UK noted the value of identifying the forums and resolutions around which to coordinate activities in order to maximise impact.
    - The Netherlands encouraged Members to take leadership on specific activities and cooperate with the Chair on carrying out tasks.
    - Speaking on joint statements, the Netherlands expressed interest in continuing to use existing statements, in particular the joint statement on Network Disruptions and expressed interest in the upcoming statement for Cybersecurity Laws.
    - Finland noted their priorities are i) cybersecurity, including looking at online harms and cross border attacks, and ii) prioritising the needs of the global South. Finland noted that a face-to-face meeting and discussion on Internet Shutdowns, including leveraging the statement, would be valuable.

- ■ Germany noted approval of current draft, and welcomed the upcoming internal/external resources. Germany suggested including activities on big data and the processing of big data, noting the concerning handling of big data by a number of non-Member countries. Germany additionally suggested to consider a Joint Statement on the GGE and open ended working group.
- ■ Costa Rica informed Members that they are looking to lead on activities and will be following up with further news on this.
- ■ Estonia had confirmed that they will be co-leading on the statement on Cybersecurity.

Action >> Members to send any additional input on the current POA draft, including on the inclusion of FOC-AN suggestions from proactive advice, by COB Monday, Feb 4.

Action >> SU to incorporate any pending input, recirculate final draft to Friends w/c Feb 4 for a 1-week silence procedure before circulating to broader Coalition.

Action >> SU to share final draft to Advisory Network in parallel to broader Coalition, and thank the Advisory Network for their input on behalf of the FOC.

Operationalising the Stockholm TOR

- ● Advisory Network
  - ○ The SU noted that the FOC-AN will be having a co-Chair election before the end of February, which will be followed by the first Quarterly Call.
  - ○ The SU noted that Canada and Germany had been the FOC-AN Liaisons for 2018, and that they will be inviting Canada to confirm whether they wish to continue in this role going forward.
  - ○ The Netherlands engaged FOC-AN on the Institute for Accountability in a digital age (I4ADA) and noted that co-Chairs had flagged this to AN Members, to work together with Members on the global discussion on accountability and provide the Institute with advice on how to organize multistakeholder processes and introduce human rights language.

FOC Membership

- ● FOC Member engagement
  - ○ Members discussed internal engagement strategy for less active Members.
  - ○ The Netherlands noted that the silence procedure on the Program of Action would provide and opportunity for contacting Member states to find POC's and leads for activities, in particular to ensure that the planned activities the statements are taken forward.

- The US noted that the internal activity planner would offer a tool to engage with all members, and guide the activities of different Members, individually and through the Coalition.
- The Netherlands of parallel efforts between the SU unit and Members looking to engage and coordinate on Member outreach.
- Updates on enlargement of FOC membership
  - Members discussed enlargement strategy:
    - The Netherlands raised the potential of contacting Belgium and Luxembourg.
    - SU additionally noted that Indonesia and South Korea had previously expressed interest in Membership.

AOB (n/a)