

Minutes from the Friends of the Chair monthly call #4

Wednesday, 27 April 2022, 15:00 UTC

Attending: Canada (FOC Chair 2022), Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ghana, Switzerland, UK, US; Support Unit [SU]

Welcome

Housekeeping

- Membership Updates
- SU noted that Canada will be hosting an in-person meeting (FOC Strategic Retreat for FOC and AN members), taking place on Wednesday, 25 May in Paris, France, with an informal reception on Tuesday, 24 May, and opportunity for bilateral meetings on Thursday, 26 May.
 - Canada and the SU are working on the agenda.
 - Logistical details will be shared soon.
 - SU encouraged Members to join the meeting.
 - Canada provided a high-level overview of the draft agenda.
 - Canada confirmed that the FOC Strategic Retreat will replace the second FOC Strategy and Coordination meeting and the FotC monthly call in May.
 - Canada noted that it will advise on the number of representatives from each country who can attend the FOC Strategic Retreat, depending on the capacity of the meeting room.
 - Canada encouraged the in-person capital level representation from the FOC and FotC Members to the Retreat in Paris.
 - Canada noted that they are looking into holding another in-person meeting later in the year.

Action >> Canada encouraged Members to get in touch with Canada / SU if they have suggestions for the agenda by COB Friday, 6 May.

Program of Action 2022

- **Shaping Global Norms**
 - Canada noted that it is looking for possible FOC engagement at the Summit of the Americas.
 - Diplomatic networks:
 - Canada noted that the FOC Strategic Retreat in Paris will serve as an opportunity for diplomatic networks to share ideas and information about relevant fora and processes.
- **Promoting Multi-stakeholder Engagement**
 - **Task Forces / Working Group**
 - Task Force on Internet Shutdowns (TFIS)

- US noted that TFIS has drafted a first version of best practices and resources for bilateral engagement around Internet Shutdowns, which is expected to be shared via newsletter shortly.
- US noted that it is finalising details for the next TFIS meeting that will be held in May, which will be hosting a workshop for judicial education on legal interventions on Internet Shutdowns.

- Digital Equality Task Force
 - The group will be holding a working session on April 28, with an award-winning human rights lawyer, Nani Jansen Reventlow, specialised in strategic litigation on freedom of expression and digital rights.
 - Canada noted that, pursuant to the Program of Action 2022, it will be organising a closed door workshop followed by a public event to explore in which ways international human rights law applies to the issue of non-discrimination, likely to be held in September and October respectively.
 - The workshop will be aiming to issue a report to be submitted to the HRC51.
 - Canada noted that the FOC governments are not going to be requested to sign the report.

- **Advisory Network:**
 - Canada noted the FOC-AN prepared a paper ahead of the Summit of the Americas, to support an inter-American, Canada-chaired ministerial meeting on Challenges to Democracy: The Inter-American Democratic Charter in the Social Media Age.
 - The paper seeks to help address the question of “What can governments who have signed the Inter-American Democratic Charter do to safeguard democracy online.”
 - Canada noted that the timing is still being negotiated.
 - Canada and FOC-AN members also discussed the possibility of the FOC issuing a statement focusing on Internet fragmentation and the value of Internet freedom during times of conflict.

- **Ramping up Advocacy, Communication, and Outreach**
 - **Advocacy**
 - Canada noted that the proposal on ToR amendments regarding issuing country-specific statements has been placed under silence procedure with the FOC until 4 May.
 - Canada noted that it will be hosting five regional consultations in South-East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East & North Africa, and

Europe that will feed into the final set of recommendations for the Ottawa Agenda.

- The consultations are to be held before June 20th, 2022.
- Canada already held a first domestic consultation in French.
- Canada noted that it is hosting a roundtable meeting in Washington DC, on May 6th.
- **Communication**
 - Canada noted that a package of materials with technical details in relation to the Social Media Campaign will be shared with the FOC and the FOC-AN Members soon.
- **Outreach**
 - Canada noted that the call with the Director of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Development Bureau, Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, on the topic of connectivity, had to be rescheduled and Canada is coordinating with her office to schedule a new meeting to be held as part of the Global Speaker Series.
 - Canada noted that the FOC and the Media Freedom Coalition will be co-hosting the event at the [World Press Freedom Global Conference 2022](#), on May 3rd, on Digital Authoritarianism and Technology-facilitated Threats to Journalists and Human Rights Defenders.

Action >> Members are encouraged to reach out to Canada if they have recommendations on participants from civil society, academia or industry to attend the Ottawa Agenda regional consultations.

FOC events and outlook

- Wednesday, 25 May - FOC Strategic Retreat (informal evening reception on 24th, opportunity for bilats on 26th).
- Thursday, 28 April - Task Force on Digital Equality monthly call
- Tuesday, 31 May, TBC - Task Force on Internet Shutdowns monthly call
- Thursday, 5 May - Silicon Valley Working Group monthly call
- Thursday, 12 May - TF-AIR monthly call
- Wednesday, 18 May - FOC-AN monthly call
- Wednesday, 29 June - Friends of the Chair monthly call