

# Friends of the Chair Meeting #1

Wednesday, 25 January 2023

Attended: US (FOC Chair), Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK; Support Unit (SU)

## Housekeeping

- As discussed in 2022, following the confirmation of the final Program of Action (PoA) 2023, the Internal PoA 2023 has been reviewed and adopted. *[Update provided in writing.]*
  - No changes to the Internal PoA 2023 were identified, thus the document will serve as an outline of SU activities in 2023.
- SU noted the FotC meetings in 2023 will dedicate more time for discussions, with most updates to be shared in writing.
  - Due to the [UNESCO Global Conference](#), the next FotC monthly meeting will be rescheduled to take place on Tuesday, 28 February.
- Upcoming deadlines:
  - Wednesday, 25 January - Silence procedure for Slovakia's membership ends. *[Please note the silence procedure was successful and that Slovakia is now a member of the FOC.]*
  - Tuesday, 31 January - Deadline to provide comments and suggested edits on the "Guiding Principles on Government Use of Surveillance Technologies and Subsequent Data Generation, Management, and Use". *[Please note this deadline has passed.]*
- Upcoming events:
  - Wednesday, 25 January - Ottawa Agenda launch and Chairship handover. *[Please note this event has already taken place.]*
    - Members were encouraged to amplify the launch on social media.
  - Wednesday, 2 February - Geneva Diplomatic Network kick-off event.
  - Tuesday, 21 February - side-event on the margins of the [UNESCO Global Conference](#) in Paris, hosted by Canada.
- Communications
  - The FOC Digital Hub will be rolled-out in the coming weeks, with access details forthcoming via email.
- Task Forces (Internet Shutdowns; Digital Equality; Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights) and Silicon Valley Working Group updates:
  - SU noted the Task Force on Internet Shutdowns and the Task Force on Digital Equality are currently undergoing open calls for membership; the deadline to express interest is **Monday, 6 February**.
  - SU noted the Task Forces and Working Group are currently discussing goals and outputs for 2023 to ensure alignment with the US PoA. *[Update provided in writing.]*

## Discussion Items

### Stockholm Terms of Reference amendments

**Action>>** US to share the proposed ToR amendments in writing with the Friends of the Chair.

### Key milestones in 2023

- Strategy and Coordination Meetings
  - US highlighted their intention to organise SCM's on the margins of Internet freedom events to ease the burdens of travel.
  - SU noted the majority of respondents to a poll circulated earlier this month identified members' availability to attend an SCM at the end of March in Washington DC, on the sidelines of the Summit for Democracy (S4D).
  - US queried whether the FotC would attend an SCM in Nairobi, Kenya or other global majority state, if it takes place during a different date, noting the current proposed dates are in between two religious holidays (Easter and Passover).



- The deadline to provide input on the third draft has been extended to **COB Tuesday, 31 January**. *[Please note this deadline has passed.]*
- Diplomatic Networks
  - The Paris Diplomatic Network kick-off event is being planned, and expected to launch ahead of the [UNESCO Global Conference](#).
  - US is planning to lead FOC engagement in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Committee on Digital Economic Policy (CDEP) fora, while Canada - FOC involvement in the UNESCO process.
- FOC-AN updates
  - FOC-AN held their first meeting of 2023 on Wednesday, 18 January where they discussed input to the “Proposed Guiding Principles on Government Use of Surveillance Technologies and Subsequent Data Generation, Management, and Use”, developing a list of potential FOC Chairs for 2024, and identifying how the FOC-AN can get involved in activities outlined in the PoA 2023.
- RightsCon submissions
  - FOC has submitted a proposal to hold a session on the misuse of technology.
  - The following Task Forces are submitting proposals: TFAIR, TFDE, and TFIS.

#### AOB

- EU working-level meeting *[Please note some of the following updates were provided in writing.]*
  - The European Union invited the FOC, the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC) and the Partnership for Information and Democracy to a working-level meeting to discuss collaboration (in Brussels and online), and how the EU and its member states can contribute to the work of the three initiatives.
  - The FOC was represented by the SU and the US, who presented the Coalition’s overall work and priorities in 2023. Attendees called for a closer collaboration and exchange of information.
- US noted that going forward more detailed information will be included in the emails ahead of monthly FotC calls and encouraged members to review them in preparation for the meetings.