Attended: Estonia (FOC Chair), Denmark, Finland, Ghana, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United States; the Support Unit.

Welcome / Opening Remarks
- The Support Unit (SU) welcomed Members to the fourth Steering Committee (SC) meeting of 2025 under the Estonian Chairship, rescheduled from the end of April.
- The next Steering Committee meeting will be held at the end of May.

Housekeeping
- The Joint Statement on Behalf of Members of the Media Freedom Coalition and Freedom Online Coalition on World Press Freedom Day 2025 was issued and can be viewed here.
- The FOC organised a Community Dialogue, and Multistakeholder Consultation on DPI at the Digital Rights and Inclusion Forum (DRIF), held last week in Lusaka, Zambia. The report of the meetings will be shared shortly.
- **FOC Outputs & Deadlines:**
  - **14 May:** Deadline to provide input to the Zero Draft of the FOC Joint Statement on AI and Human Rights
  - **16 May:** Deadline to provide input to the Zero Draft of the FOC Rights-Respecting DPI Principles. The public consultation for the draft DPI Principles has been shared on the FOC website, and Members are encouraged to amplify this to interested stakeholders.
- **Upcoming Events:**
  - **12-14 May:** EuroDIG | Strasbourg, France
    - The FOC will be organising a multistakeholder consultation on DPI, and a meeting of Council of Europe (CoE) representatives to share information and explore collaboration opportunities. An invitation has been shared with CoE representatives. *[Please note these events have taken place; a report will be shared shortly.]*
  - **23-27 June**: Internet Governance Forum (IGF) | Lillestrøm, Norway *(hybrid)*
    - The second **FOC Strategy & Coordination Meeting** will be held on the margins of the IGF on Sunday, 22 June.
      - Further information on the meeting schedule, logistics, and input documents will be shared in the coming weeks. Members are encouraged to **register for the IGF** at your earliest convenience, via the following link.
    - The following FOC sessions have been confirmed:
      - Day 0: *Shaping Global AI Governance Through Multistakeholder Action (TFAIR)*
      - Open Forum: *How Technical Standards Shape Connectivity and Inclusion*
      - Workshop: *Ensuring Digital Inclusion with Rights-Respecting DPI* - to be merged with a session on the same topic.

Chairship and Program of Action 2025 Updates
- Regarding the implementation of Goal 1 from the 2025 Program of Action (POA):
  - Estonia provided a recap of the regional dialogue held on the sidelines of DRIF in Lusaka, and expressed gratitude to the Netherlands for leading the way with regional dialogues during their Chairship. Estonia highlighted the value of the discussions in ensuring multistakeholder perspectives and supporting engagement with global South countries.
    - Estonia provided an overview of bilateral meetings held in Lusaka with countries in southern Africa, and potential opportunities for new Members in the Coalition.
  - Further to this, Estonia outlined their ongoing engagement with the European Union and

DG Connect on Internet governance and Internet freedom issues.

- Estonia noted FOC engagement at EuroDIG in Strasbourg, including a meeting with the Council of Europe Secretariat and other European ambassadors.
- Estonia noted an invitation for the FOC to engage in an EU-organised event on Internet accountability. *[Please note this event has been rescheduled to September.]*
- Estonia highlighted that it would be helpful to discuss how to formalise FOC engagement with the EU and explore the potential of having the EU observe the upcoming SCM in June as a first step.

○ The Netherlands provided background on the efforts to update the joint statement on AI and human rights, noting the rapid development of artificial intelligence technologies and its corresponding risks in the last five years since the FOC Joint Statement on AI and Human Rights. Given the development of new risks and geopolitical pressures, the Netherlands highlighted the value of having a more comprehensive statement which responds to this changing context.

- The Zero Draft has been shared for review and input, alongside the rationale for development, and the Netherlands encouraged all Members to provide input and reach out with any questions.
- The Joint Statement is anticipated to be launched on Day 0 of the IGF in Norway.

○ The Netherlands also provided an update on upcoming plans for FOC engagement in the WSIS+20 process, highlighting the publication of the roadmap on the modalities for the negotiations over the next few months.

- Following this, meetings with capital, New York and Geneva colleagues are planned to develop concrete language proposals on substantive priority themes for FOC Members ahead of the negotiations, which will be reflected in the redeveloped Food for Thought paper.

○ The SU noted the ongoing dialogue with UNDESA regarding the WSIS+20 process:

- The roadmap to negotiations will be published over the next few weeks.
- **June / July 2025:** Co-facilitators are planning three consultations - one at the UNESCO conference (June), one at the IGF (June) and the WSIS High-Level Forum in Geneva (July).
- There will likely also be a PGA (President of the General Assembly)-facilitated consultation, which will also take place before the Zero Draft is issued.

- Regarding the implementation of Goal 2 the POA, Estonia noted:
  ○ The public consultation for input to the **FOC Rights-Respecting DPI Principles** is ongoing and is complemented by regional dialogues held at DRIF and EuroDIG, with plans for launch at the Tallinn Digital Summit in October 2025.
  ○ Furthermore, Estonia hosted an event with UNDP and the Polish Presidency of the EU Council to discuss digital public infrastructure, among other issues. This was an opportunity for Estonia to introduce the DPI principles and receive further input.
- Regarding the implementation of Goal 3 of the POA, Estonia noted:
  ○ Estonia held a lunch event with African ambassadors in Brussels as part of its efforts to advance global South engagement. More details will be shared with the SC shortly.
- The SU provided an update of recent activities and outputs of the Advisory Network (AN):
  ○ Members of the AN supporting and participating in the recently held sessions at DRIF.
  ○ AN Members are continuing work on the Reactive Advice on Undersea Cables with plans to finalise and share the advice with the FOC by mid-May.

Discussion Items:

Strategy & Coordination Meeting (SCM) at IGF - Agenda

- The SU provided an overview of the second SCM under the Estonian Chairship, to be held in June on the margins of the IGF:
    - Given challenges to find a suitable amount of time for discussion, the bulk of the SCM will be taking place on **Day -1 of the IGF, Sunday 22 June**.
    - This SCM will be an opportunity to reflect on the 2025 Chairship so far, as well as planning for the rest of the year and into 2026. Given the timing of the SCM, it may also be a good opportunity to discuss FOC engagement in WSIS+20 in more concrete terms.
    - Taking place alongside the IGF, it will also be an opportunity to proactively engage with Global South governments. To facilitate this, the SU noted that there is available funding to support travel and engagement of Global South FOC Members.
- SCM Agenda outline (22 June):
    - <u>Morning:</u> Updates on 2025 Chairship and other FOC outputs, including session with Advisory Network on insights and trends.
    - <u>Afternoon:</u>
        - Government-only session for more strategic discussions and bigger picture questions for the Coalition.
        - Capacity building exercise on digital public infrastructure.
- Members are requested to confirm their attendance ASAP to assist with planning and logistics.

2026 Chairship
- The SU highlighted that there are currently no expressions of interest for the FOC Chairship for 2026, and the importance of discussing this at the upcoming SCM.
    - US noted that there have been difficulties previously when there has been no FOC chair (2020), including in decision-making and sustaining momentum on key pieces of work.
        - US encouraged those Members who have not chaired to consider this as a potential opportunity, particularly those outside the SC.
    - The Netherlands voiced their support to dedicate time during the SCM to discuss future Chairships in more detail.
    - Luxembourg requested further information on the obligations and financial resources needed to be Chair, particularly as a smaller country. A guiding document which outlines this in further detail will be circulated to Members.
    - Estonia further emphasised the need for a Chair in 2026, given the signal this sends to civil society and other actors in the field, particularly at this crucial moment for Internet freedom and governance discussions.
    - So far, Estonia's discussions have largely been concentrated within the SC.
- The SU agreed to re-share the call for expressions of interest to chair the Coalition in 2026 with the FOC ahead of the SCM in June.