

Attendance: Estonia (FOC Chair 2025), Switzerland (FOC Chair 2026), Denmark, Finland, Ghana, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United Kingdom; FOC Support Unit.

Summary:

During the tenth Steering Committee (SC) call under Estonia's Chairship, the Support Unit (SU) provided general updates, including information on upcoming events and activities. This was the first SC call following the Strategy and Coordination Meeting (SCM), which took place in Tallinn in October 2025. The call included Chairship updates and focused primarily on preparations for the Chairship transition and planning the FOC's engagement in the WSIS process through the end of the year.

Action Point >> FOC Members interested in leading on specific topics and priorities in 2026 to contact the Switzerland

Action Point >> SU to share list of current and prospective Members to SC for re-engagement.

Action Point >> SC Members to note any objections or concerns to the FOC Support Unit joining the Forum on Information and Democracy coordination mechanism on information integrity

Minutes

Welcome / Opening Remarks

- The Support Unit (SU) welcomed Members to the tenth Steering Committee (SC) meeting of 2025 under the Estonian Chairship.
- The SU thanked everyone who joined the SCM in Tallinn earlier this month, and for all their contributions.
- New additions to the SU team were introduced: Helen Turek, as Programme Lead, and Klara Marland as Programme Coordinator.

Housekeeping

• SU Updates:

- The report of the FOC Ministerial Meeting and SCM held on the margins of the Tallinn Digital Summit on 8-10 October has been shared with the FOC for review.
- Switzerland has been confirmed as the incoming Chair of the FOC in 2026 following a successful silence procedure. As Switzerland and the Support Unit (SU) are currently working on an external communications plan.
- Italy has expressed interest in supporting the work of the FOC. The SU is liaising with Italy's relevant points of contact to confirm this.

• FOC Outputs & Processes:

- **Program of Action (PoA) 2026:** Switzerland and the SU are consolidating feedback received during the SCM in Tallinn to develop a first draft of the POA. FOC and FOC-AN Members will be asked to provide comments and edits to the first draft of the document.
- **Steering Committee EOIs:** The call for expressions of interest to join the 2026 Steering Committee will be circulated in the coming weeks.
 - There are 14 seats available.
 - SC Members who wish to continue will have to re-apply, and are encouraged to conduct outreach to Global South Members to diversify the SC Membership.

• Upcoming Events & Meetings:

- **(TBC) December:** FOC 2025/26 Handover Event | Geneva

- Estonia and Switzerland are currently coordinating to organise a handover event in Geneva in December. More information about the event will be shared shortly.
- **15 - 17 December:** WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly | New York
 - Estonia submitted a side-event proposal on behalf of the FOC, in coordination with Switzerland, and the Netherlands. The event is centered around operationalising human-rights-based governance for AI and DPI.
 - More details about the event are forthcoming.

Chairship and **Program of Action 2025** Updates

- Estonia stressed that it would like to have an event in both Geneva and New York to mark the conclusion of its chairship and the commencement of Switzerland's Chairship. Estonia also noted it would be valuable to organise additional FOC events in New York.
- Estonia is considering opportunities to further promote the DPI Principles and reach a broader audience. Members are encouraged to contact Estonia with ideas for events where FOC engagement on DPI could be valuable.

Chairship and Program of Actions 2026 Updates

- Switzerland received extensive and constructive feedback during the meetings in Tallinn, Estonia, as well as strong support from the FOC SU. They are currently reviewing written feedback on the draft document.
- Switzerland confirmed that its priorities remain unchanged, focusing on digital governance, including the continuation of the Global Digital Compact (GDC) process, and on AI governance, particularly in view of the upcoming AI Dialogue to be held in July in Geneva.
- They also intend to build on the FOC's 2025 activities, continuing efforts on information integrity and DPI implementation.

Discussion

Outreach to Prospective Members

- Throughout the 2025 Chairship, Estonia has continued efforts to expand the FOC's membership, engaging with prospective Members through regional dialogues under the PoA and through bilateral meetings.
- SC Members were invited to support Estonia and Switzerland in outreach activities and to volunteer for assistance where possible.

Outstanding PoA 2025 Implementation

- At the SCM, Members received updates on the implementation of the 2025 PoA and the progress achieved under its outlined goals.
- SU noted this meeting is an opportunity to review upcoming priorities for the remainder of the year within each goal of the PoA 2025, and to discuss plans for the Chairship transition:
 - Goal 1: Advocate for a human rights-based and multistakeholder approach to the governance of the Internet and digital technologies.
 - **WSIS+20 Review and GDC Implementation:**
 - The Netherlands continues to advance efforts within the FOC to exchange information, facilitate coordination between FOC Members, FOC-AN, and external stakeholders, and advocate for a human rights-based, multistakeholder approach in both the WSIS+20 Review and the GDC implementation.
 - Remaining activities include:

- FOC discussion on WSIS+20 Outcome Document Revision 1 (FOC and FOC-AN, virtual, 11 November)
 - FOC side-event at the WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting at the UNGA in December.
 - The Netherlands are preparing the WSIS High-Level side-event.
- The Netherlands also announced plans to organise a side-event on 19 November with OHCHR, during which the FOC will be prominently mentioned.
- It was noted in Tallinn that several FOC Members (Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia, and Canada) are considering or planning to include non-governmental stakeholders in their national delegations as part of broader engagement efforts.
- **Undersea Cables:**
 - A FOC Learning Call on undersea cables, led by Article 19 (FOC-AN Member) will be scheduled in December.
 - Switzerland noted readiness for this topic to continue being developed under its upcoming Chairship, inviting Members to indicate if they would be willing to lead specific initiatives, such as organising a side-event on a particular topic, emphasising that this does not require a full-year commitment.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):**
 - AI will remain a prominent focus in the 2026 PoA under the Chairship of Switzerland. Germany, the Netherlands, and the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) have been leading AI-related efforts on the FOC's side by co-chairing the Task Force on AI and Responsible Innovation (TFAIR).
 - Switzerland expressed openness to continue the Task Force, aiming to achieve concrete outcomes through its work. Luxembourg emphasised the high level of attention on AI and stressed the importance of maintaining the Task Force.
 - The SU noted that if TFAIR Co-Chairs wish to continue the Task Force, they will have to submit a mandate renewal request to the SC.
- Goal 2: Advance digital inclusion, including through the promotion of inclusive and rights-respecting digital public infrastructure.
 - **DPI Principles promotion:**
 - The upcoming FOC side-event at the WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting, if accepted, will provide an opportunity to promote the Rights-Respecting DPI Principles. Further amplification of these principles is planned through regional events and bilateral meetings.
 - Estonia emphasised its commitment to continue this work, ensuring that the DPI Principles are widely recognised. This represents the first high-level guidance on DPI, providing an important model for other countries, particularly in South Asia, to follow, prioritising human rights and privacy.
- Goal 3: Increase meaningful engagement with Global South governments and stakeholders.
 - **Remaining activities:**
 - Continue outreach to prospective Members [see above].
 - Engage Global South governments and stakeholders in upcoming events, including the WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting side-event.
- Encourage Global South Members to join the SC 2026 cohort.

2025/26 Handover

- Estonia and Switzerland are planning a high-level handover event in Geneva, tentatively scheduled for the second week of December. This event will highlight the achievements of the Estonian Chairship and provide an overview of the priorities and plans under the Swiss Chairship.
- Estonia emphasised that the meeting will be open to both capital-level representatives and Geneva-based participants.

AOB

- Estonia expressed thanks to the FOC SU for their support in implementing the POA 2025, and to other FOC Members for their continued engagement throughout the year.
- The Forum on Information and Democracy (FID) is planning to develop a coordination mechanism between multilateral/intergovernmental secretariats on information integrity in order to share information, avoid duplication, and collaborate on projects. Participating organisations include UN, UNESCO, UNDP, Council of Europe, African Union, Media Freedom Coalition, etc. FID would coordinate the mechanism for at least two years.
 - FOC SU was invited to participate, noting FOC's past work in this area, notably the Task Force on Information Integrity Online (led by Denmark, Netherlands, Wikimedia Foundation), and the Joint Statement on Information Integrity Online and Elections.
 - Expected SU involvement: attend a minimum of 4 online meetings/year, share information via coordination tools, present relevant projects, and possibly join the annual in-person workshop, depending on funding.
- The next Steering Committee meeting will take place at the end of November.