

Attendance: Estonia (FOC Chair 2025), Switzerland (FOC Chair 2026), Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United States; FOC Support Unit.

Summary:

During the eleventh Steering Committee (SC) meeting under Estonia's Chairship, the Support Unit (SU) provided housekeeping updates, including on preparations for the 2026 Program of Action (PoA), the Chairship transition, and upcoming events in Geneva and New York. The meeting featured reflections from Estonia on its 2025 Chairship, and discussions on Member leadership for the forthcoming 2026 PoA and the proposed mandate renewal of the Task Force on AI and Human Rights (TFAIR).

Action Point >> Members to reach out to Switzerland and SU to express interest to lead on activities in the 2026 PoA

Action Point >> Members to send Expressions of Interest to serve on the 2026 Steering Committee by 12 December

Action Point >> Members planning to attend upcoming events in New York on 15 December (Side Event to the WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting & FOC Chairship Handover Reception) to RSVP by emailing SU (events@freedomonlinecoalition.com) by Friday, December 12

Past Action Point >> SC sign-off of the 2026 PoA by COB UTC Friday, 5 December

Past Action Point >> SC to provide written comments on the TFAIR Mandate Renewal Form by COB UTC Monday, 8 December

Minutes

Welcome / Opening Remarks

- The SU welcomed Members to the eleventh and last Steering Committee (SC) meeting of 2025 under the Estonian Chairship.
- The SU thanked Members for their engagement throughout the year and highlighted the importance of coordination in the lead-up to the Chairship transition.

Housekeeping

- **SU Updates:**
 - The SU travelled to Geneva for planning meetings with the Government of Switzerland from 18-19 November, working on the 2026 PoA and planning for key activities in 2026.
 - The SU has joined the *Forum on Information and Democracy Coordination Mechanism* on information integrity following no objections from Steering Committee members. The first meeting will be held on 10 Dec.
- **FOC Outputs & Processes:**
 - **Steering Committee EOIs:** The initial deadline for the call for expressions of interest to join the 2026 Steering Committee passed on 1 Dec. This has now been extended to 12 Dec.
 - As of Wednesday 10 December, Armenia, Germany, Ghana, Luxembourg, Netherlands, UK and US have submitted EOIs (Switzerland and Estonia are automatically confirmed).
 - SC Members who wish to continue their membership in 2026 are encouraged to submit EOIs before the new deadline of 12 Dec.
 - There are 14 seats available.
- **FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) Review**
 - The mandate of the current FOC-AN cohort (2024-2026) will expire during the Swiss Chairship, in June 2026. Ahead of launching the next selection process and as a condition

to accepting the results of the previous selection, the Steering Committee and FOC-AN have been mandated to review the [FOC-AN Terms of Reference \(ToR\)](#) and align the FOC-AN selection process.

- FOC SU is setting up a review committee, which will be composed of FOC SU, AN co-chairs and Troika SC Members (CH, EE and NL).

- **Events & Meetings**

- **8 December: FOC Chairship Handover | Geneva**
 - *Advancing Human Rights Online: FOC Chairship Handover and Reception was held at the Permanent Mission of Canada in Geneva.* The Handover brought together FOC Member States' diplomatic representatives in Geneva, FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) Members, and representatives of UN agencies based in Geneva. It provided an opportunity to reflect on the achievements and lessons of the Estonian Chairship, particularly in its work in Geneva, and to mark the handover of the Chairship to Switzerland while setting the tone for the 2026 priorities.
- **15 - 17 December: WSIS+20 High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly | New York**
 - **Side event (13:15-14:30 15 Dec, UNHQ): From Commitments to Action: Operationalizing Human-Rights Based Governance for AI and Digital Public Infrastructure.** The side-event will bring together high-level representatives of FOC Member States, members of the FOC Advisory Network, and other key partners and stakeholders to explore practical ways to translate WSIS+20 commitments into action, focusing on rights-respecting governance of AI and inclusive digital public infrastructure.
 - **Reception (18:30 15 Dec, Estonia Ambassador's Residence):** The reception will bring together Permanent Representatives, as well as FOC Member representatives from capitals and UN agencies to mark the Chairship handover from Estonia to Switzerland.
- FOC SU welcomed SC Members to attend events - especially those representatives based in Geneva and New York.

Chairship and Program of Action 2025 Updates

- Estonia reflected on the past year under their Chairship:
 - They emphasised impact in regards to FOC visibility, the value of regional dialogues (including in Taiwan, Zambia, and Brazil), learning calls, and the essential contributions of the FOC Advisory Network.
 - They highlighted Netherlands' leadership on the WSIS+20 agenda, and reiterated commitment to continuing to lead on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in 2026.
 - They underscored the critical role of the FOC SU and the need for sustainable funding.
 - Estonia closed by emphasising that the PoA is a collective coalition effort, thanking Members for their active participation and looking forward to continued collaboration during the upcoming events in Geneva and New York.
- FOC SU also reflected on the 2025 Chairship:
 - FOC SU thanked Estonia for their leadership, and other members for their support and leadership throughout 2025
 - They spoke about ambitious and focused PoA activities in 2025, noting strong external feedback following FOC's work on the WSIS+20 process, as well as the achievements regarding the work on DPI and related promotion.
 - They also noted the launch of the capacity-building programme, which has contributed to the FOC's development as a 'learning coalition.'
- The Netherlands provided additional updates:
 - The next version of the WSIS Outcome Document (Revision 2) will be released shortly, and shared information about a virtual discussion taking place on 5 December to enable FOC Members and the AN to exchange views on the document.

- As part of the continuation of the preparatory process roadmap there will be informal consultations on Revision 2 in New York 9–11 December, in addition to the Informal Multistakeholder Sounding Board (IMSB)-led virtual stakeholder consultation on 8 December.

Discussion items

Program of Action 2026

- The 2026 PoA is in its final phase of development, with SC sign-off due 5 December. The document will then go to the full coalition for an expedited 5-day silence procedure, aiming for launch on 15 December at the New York FOC events.
- Switzerland emphasised a strong appreciation for Estonia's work and lessons learned from 2025, and outlined the vision and priorities for the 2026 Chairship:
 - 2026 will be a significant year for digital governance, with ongoing WSIS+20 implementation, GDC operationalisation, and the first global UN AI governance processes taking shape in Geneva.
 - The PoA is structured around three strategic goals:
 - Strengthening FOC engagement in global digital governance processes
 - Addressing ongoing challenges to Internet freedom and digital resilience
 - Operationalising multistakeholder approaches to digital governance
 - Switzerland aims to pursue a multistakeholder, coalition-driven approach and encourages Members to take the lead on elements of the PoA. Estonia also underscored the need for Members to indicate interest in leading specific activities.
- **Estonia** suggested and reiterated willingness to lead on DPI and **Luxembourg** expressed interest in supporting activities on information integrity as they are starting to take on a stronger role in the Forum on Information and Democracy.
- FOC SU noted that in the absence of other FOC leads, the default leadership on PoA activities defaults to the Chair. Similarly, activities in specific diplomatic hubs, such as engagement in the Human Rights Council, will be delivered through relevant diplomatic networks, led by the Chair, unless other FOC Members wish to take this forward.
- The discussion was rounded off by emphasising the importance of SC leadership to support and advance goals in the specific policy areas in the PoA.

TFAIR

- TFAIR submitted a request to renew its mandate under the Swiss Chairship in 2026. The government co-chairs of TFAIR, Germany and the Netherlands, presented the draft mandate renewal.
- Key objectives include:
 - Aligning TFAIR's work fully with the 2026 PoA
 - Building on existing work and consolidating achievements
 - Delivering concrete outputs (learning calls, side events, studies)
 - Enhancing multistakeholder engagement and internal coordination
- Key goals as outlined in the draft mandate renewal include:
 - Promotion of FOC objectives, concepts, ideas, and initiatives on the responsible, human rights-based use of AI in international fora and events in 2026
 - Diplomatic coordination on multistakeholder accessibility and participation to the Global Dialogue on AI Governance and other fora
 - Building knowledge among FOC members on the impact of AI usage on the safeguarding of human rights
- Switzerland welcomed the alignment with its priorities and requested early coordination with Swiss national implementers and the FOC SU once the mandate is finalised.

- Luxembourg noted the importance of considering systemic AI challenges that do not receive as much attention, including the socio-economic impact of AI.
- SC Members discussed whether to proceed with a potential AI tracker, which will be further considered by the TFAIR Members call on 12 December.
- Written comments on the draft mandate renewal by the SC are due by COB Monday, December 8, after which an updated version will be shared for sign off.

AOB

- Denmark informed the SC that due to limited resources, it will not continue as a Steering Committee Member in 2026 but will remain active in broader FOC engagement.
- The SU thanked SC Members for their collaboration throughout the year and noted that the next SC meeting will take place in January 2026, under Switzerland's Chairship.